



E. P. Brown

BLASTS FROM A RAM'S HORN

MEETIN MATTERS ON
THE CIDERVILLE SIRKUT

SAYINGS, SERMONS, AND LECTURES

BY

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(EDITOR OF THE RAM'S HORN)

ALSO

An Account of the Author's Conversion

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION BY REV. H. A. BUCHEL, D. D.

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PREFACE.

THE subject matter of this volume originally appeared in the newspaper of which the author is editor. It is published as a book, not only to give it wider circulation, but to accommodate those who have expressed a desire to have it in a more permanent and convenient form.

The matter in Part First appeared in the shape of Letters, supposed to have been written by one brother to another at a distance, describing things occurring in the Church and community at home. They seem to have been written at irregular intervals, covering a term of years. The extracts given in the book are not in the order in which they were published in the paper, but are rearranged, the better to divide them into chapters.

It has been the aim of the author to photograph people and things just about as they may be seen on the average country circuit. The characters are mostly living people, though it

would perhaps be hard to find them all in any one Church. Many of the incidents occurred very much as they are given, and the most of the others are based on things that have really happened. The things which many would suppose to be exaggerations, are generally the ones where the whole fact has not been stated, lest the occurrence should be discredited as improbable.

The author's aim throughout has not been simply to entertain, but he has prayed that God would use what he has written to help extend his kingdom. The author came late into the vineyard of Christ, and is anxious to make every day count for the Master. He hopes that many will be led to seek the kingdom of God by finding out, from some of the life-pictures presented, that they are still outside of it. This is his only reason for engaging in the portrait business on such an extensive scale. In the Second Part, the aim has been, by different ways, to endeavor to turn the thoughts of the reader toward God.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND., May 2, 1892.

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INTRODUCTION.

ELIJAH P. BROWN is a true John Baptist—"the voice of one crying, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make his paths straight." He dresses like other men, but his voice and his pen proclaim him to be a true prophet of God.

Thousands of people have been awakened in reading "Into and Out of Infidelity," the story of our prophet's conversion. Other thousands have been stimulated and inspired by the regular weekly blasts from *The Ram's Horn*. Yet other thousands will now be established in the ways of righteousness by the mature wisdom of this book.

Canon Farrar has been calling on God to send the Church another prophet. And God has answered, as he always answers, by sending a good many prophets "before" the "call" was made. God always anticipates our wants. So we have in England such true prophets as Canon Farrar, and General Booth, and Hugh Price Hughes. Farrar is at home in Westminster Abbey, with a beautiful liturgical service; and Booth is at home in the slums, with a tambourine band; and Hughes is at

home at either of these extremes, though he works chiefly with the main body of the Lord's army which is between the extreme wings represented by Farrar and Booth. In our own country we have such true prophets as Phillips Brooks and Dwight L. Moody, both of whom have vast power before audiences. But among them all, no one has such gift of stating truth with epigrammatic force as our prophet. Manifestly God has given him power to state the truth with such directness that the average man, and all men, can see that God lives, and that Righteousness is his name. It is no wonder that the daily papers, from Maine to California, are regularly quoting *The Ram's Horn*. When the bullet hits the bull's-eye, every one shouts, Bravo! When the truth is made as clear as sunshine, every one is moved to find some way to say, Amen!

The prophet always is marked as one with eyes to see what is genuine; and, so, what is of God. He can see the shams in religion, in politics, in business, and in society. When he sees, he speaks. To see the truth, to speak it, and to live it, is the duty of every man. And the man who is willing to accept grace to do these things, becomes the Lord's true prophet. Unhappily, we never have an adequate supply of prophets in this world, though we need them more than we need money, or fine clothes, or cupolas on our houses, or fresco-

ing on our churches. Why should not every man be full of righteousness?

The true prophet is recognized at his home when there is any worthy character there. Jesus said the prophet is not without honor save in his own country. That is always true among a people of indifferent morals and dull eyes. When the people have clear eyes and pure hearts the prophet has vast power at home. So our prophet is eagerly sought in every pulpit and in every revival meeting at his home, where he has the undisputed reverence of the pure in heart. There are two witnesses to character in this world: One is the abidance of the Holy Ghost, and the other is the reverence of the pure in heart. So earth and heaven agree.

Every reader of this book will find himself built up in the faith. The light needs no introduction, because it is good for the eyes. This book needs no words of praise, because the truth is sweet to the heart.

HENRY A. BUCHTEL.

INDIANAPOLIS, July 1, 1892.

PART FIRST.

MEETIN MATTERS ON THE CIDERVILLE SIRKUT.

Selections from the Letters of
SILAS GANDERFOOT, OF MUSKEETUR KOUNTY,
To his Brother Jess.

CHAPTER I.

THE CIDERVILLE MEETIN HOUSE.

An Introduction to Some of the Members.

KURNEL, SOUNDIN BRASS is the hed man ov Ciderville now. Heze ben amungst us from a boy almost, and is ez well known all over Muskeetur Kounty ez the taste ov quinine. He was razed in Chinkbug Township, and was a boy who wudent never march behind nobody else. If he cudent carry the flag hisself, and be rite up in frunt all the time, he wudent play. It pears ez tho he was born with a good strong opinyun ov hisself, and heze never got intirely over it. He thinks more ov his own gifts to this day than a woman duz ov a lookin-glass; but I spose heze got a rite to, fur I tell you heze got sumthin in the bank to show fur it. The Kurnel duz own a preshus lot ov good payin property, Jess, as sure ez you liv, and theres no two ways about it. He owns the Ciderville Steem



Mill, the Wahoo Kreemery, the Lizzardsburg Wool Faktry, and the Shakeville Tannery. Besides this, heze president ov the Muddy Water Bank ov Kommerce, and he owns most all the stock in the Goosetown and Ciderville Gravel Road, to say nuthin oʋ his big Ginerall Store and Tin Shop in Ciderville, where you kin buy evrything frum pins to peppersass.

Fur nearly thirty yeer Kurnel Brass has bought about evrything us farmers has had to sell, and he hez sold us about evrything we hav had to buy, konsekwently it has kum to be the most natcheral thing in the wurd for us to depend on the Kurnel fur about evrything we need, from breadstuff to religyun; and so whatever Bruther Brass has to say we ginerally kunklude is about so, outside ov munny matters, and ez he has snuffed so we hav sneezed.

Anuther man that you cudent help seein, if you shud kum to our meetin-house and leeve yer spex at home, is Bruther Tinklun Simbul. Heze alwuz drest up like a stump speeker, and has a look ez knowin ez a man who shaves notes fur a livin. He wears gold spraddle glasses on his knoze, and puts on a clean shirt evry day in the week. He peers to kno a heep, and kin make a speech most any time about anything, frum small-pox to stickin-plasters, in a way grand anuff to print in bloo ink in an almanick. Bruther Simbul has never ben made bo-legged by carryin munny in his pockets, and if he had to swop his own swett fur bread, sum ov us thinks it wud be mighty seldum he wud ever hide them nice store teeth ov hizen in pie; but for lookin like korn in tossle, and

sayin snappy things ez sudden ez a gun goin off you cudent find a man enny wheres who cud hold a kandle to him. His wife keeps a bordin house, and the bordin house keeps him, without his havin to break his hart by thinkin about hard work. It was à lucky day fur Bruther Simbul when he married Sairy Jane Spry. Land knows what wud hav bekum ov the poor man if it hadent a ben for her. Sum ov us broached the matter to him one day in a joke, and it skairt him most to deth.

Isum Klover is a man who haint neyer ben mutch akount, till about eight or ten yeer ago, when he jined Church wun nite durin a pertracted meetin. Me and Squire Boxwood, and sum more ov us wheel hosses, only giv him three munts to hold out, and we all dun what we cud to inkurridge him, by givin him to understand that when he got to behavin decent, mebbe wede fellership with him, and giv him sum work to do; but to the amazement ov evrybody, he purseeded immejit to quit drinkin whisky and kard playin, and kunsiderable other permiskus devilment he had ben up to fur a long spell back, and then he sot rite down to good behavin as stiddy ez tho he wanted to git elected to offiss. He went to work like a boy eatin pie frum that very minit, and pade his dets, and fixt hissself up with sum new cloze, and soon begun to look ez brisk ez a skule teacher. The fust thing anybody knode, old Isum had bought a little patch ov land frum Kurnel Brass, over in the Bean Blossom settlement, and, notwithstanding the perdictshuns ov all ov us that he wud soon be back in the ditch wuss thun ever agin, he kep rite on, workin faithful,

watchin his peeze and kewze, mindin his own business, and goin to meetin nearly as reglar as the preecher; and to-day the old feller akshully owns a purty good little farm ov his own, and peers to be a prosperin like blackberries on rented land. I dont think I ever seen anything in a story book that was more beatin than the way Isum hez turned out. In sum ways he is the beetinest man I ever seen with a hat on. I honestly bleeve heze got it into his hed that to be religyus means to behave yourself evry blessed minnit, and I dont bleeve that he wud tell a thing that he knode wuzzent about so if he cud make forty dollars by doin it; and if that haint runnin goodness kleeer into the ground, Jess, what do you call it? I bleeve in lookin ez sollum in meetin as the next wun, but when I hav a chance to swop an old hoss fur a yung wun by tutchin up his teeth a little with a phile, I alwas kunsider it my bounden duty to do it; fur Ive heerd more thun wun preecher say that the Lord alwas helps the man who helps hisself, and I kno Bruther Skybuster has sed, time and agin, that the feller who wont fether his own nest when he kin, is a good deal wuss thun he ort to be. If evrybody wud liv akordin to the programm Isums a tryin to karry out, Ide like to hav sumbody tell me how the dockturs cud ever tell whether a body was krazy or not.

I furgot to tell you that Bruther Skybuster is our preecher now. He has been on this sirkut three or four times, off and on, and I speckt heze married, baptized, and buried more people than any man in shiny cloze you most ever sot eyes on. I

tell you, Jess, heze dun a power ov good amungst us, but then of korse he got paid fur it. Rube Jenkins giv him two dollars in munny and four bushels ov korn jest for preechin his seckund wifes funeral, and it dident take him more thun an hour and a haff to do it nuther. Its amazin to me that more ov the preechers dont git rich. I dont know how it is with you, but amungst us its got so that you cant step into a meetin-house any more but what its munny fust thing. The hat is shoved under your nose right away to begin with, as soon as the singin is over, before you know anything about what kind ov a sarmint yore a goin to git.

Preechers are alwuz a talkin about salvashun bein free, but I tell you they pop it to us fur their preechin most onmerciful out this way. Religyun is a good thing, but I think sumtimes that it kums skandlus high with us. It costs me sixteen dollars a year, wet or dry, to belong to meetin, and I believe I cud behave jest about ez good if I never got within a mile ov a meetin house. Sumtime I hav a big noshun to do it, and save the munny; but the old woman gits at me, and sez we wudent be thought mutch ov, and that might make a difference with the gals in marryin; besides which we kin pay the preecher in a lot ov things the pigs wont miss, and so lookin at it in that way, mebbe its jest about ez well fur us to keep on doin our sheer towards keepin the old gospel ship a goin; but I tell you, Jess, it makes me feel like a streak ov roomatiz sumtimes when a kulleckshun is bein took up that nuthin but munny kin go into. When the preecher kums to your house to dun you, you

kin give him punkins and dried apples, but you cant git shut ov him that way in meetin before folks.

Unkel Peeleg Wilkins is wun ov the members that weer not ashamed ov. In fakt heze wun ov the most forehanded men weeve got, and outside ov Kurnel Brass I dont spoze theres a man in Rackune Township that knoze better how to skin an eel and save all the hide and taller than Unkel Peeleg duz. He has rite smart ov religyun, but you wudent never mistrust it if you didnt hear him talk in meetin; but when you kum to munny, evrybody knoze heze got that, bekawz weeve most all ov us had to go to him and borry at sum time or uther. Frum the way he lives tho, yude think he wuzzent wuth a butejak, fur altho he owns more thun seven hundred akers ov land, and has more munny a drawin interest than a skule mam cud figger up, he lives in a little kabbun ov three rooms, away back on Mildoo Krick, and keeps his hosses in a log barn that birds cud fly thru. Heze down on karput and books and pikters and all kinds ov ginkrax, and dont hav no sech nonsense around his house. Heze as onasumin ez a ground mole, and dont put on no more stile thun a stone jug, but I tell you heze all wool in munny matters, tho its harder work thun runnin a cider-press to git mutch out of him fur meetin purpusez.

Sister Brass is a powerful fine womun. Sheze Kurnel Brasses wife, but that dont peer to make no difference with her. In her place most anybody else wud be ez domineerin as a banty rooster, but she haint. Sheze a little womun, but sheze got a

dredful big hart. It duz beat all how she kin make the sun shine in a sick-room. When our boy Hy-rum was so sick that he neerly dide last winter with them shakin spazzums, that little womun left her own children and kum all the way out to our house and sot up with him, and it seemed ez tho that frum the very minit she laid her hand on his hed the child begun to mend, and it wuzzent a week before he was up and around agin. I tell you, Jess, sheze solid gold, tho she is ez plain ez a yarn mitten, and dont wear no more jewelry than youde find on a hat-rack. If I was raal bad sick I wud ruther huv her around the house thun four dollers wuth ov medicine. She dont hav very mutch to say, but she has ways about her that makes evrybody who kums ny her want to jine meetin. If we had a few more like her it wudent take so turrible mutch hard preechin to keep the jails empty.



The next man I want to tell you about is Bruther Kalup Chiller. Heze not sech a turribul sollum lookin man at a public sale or a shootin match, but whenever he gits up to tawk in meetin you most feel ez tho the sun was a gittin reddy to set. He wears big bloo specks, which gives his hed

a kind ov a skullish look, and you never see him without a big red hankercher tied klose around his neck. He most alwas smells of liniment, and sneezes ez tho he was jest ketchin fresh kold agin, but heze a dredful good man. Nobody kin see him in meetin without sayin that. It dont peer to be no trick at all fur him to be religyus, and they say that whenever he tawks in Sunday skule evry child there looks most skairt to deth.

Nate Forbus is a splendid main strength singer, tho he dont kno a note frum a hoss fly. He lernt what he knoze about muzik frum beetin the base drum in the millishy. He has a voice that matches Bruther Skybusters preechin most splendid, and if thaide only keep out the quire, and give Nate full swing, I bleeve wede soon hav meetins that fokes wud kum miles thru the mud to see. Theres wun drawback about Nate tho, and that is, you cant never depend on him when there happens to be meetin on lodge night. They say heel nearly go without eatin to kum to Church at any uther time; but if anybody is a goin to ride the goat, hede purty ny giv up his chance ov goin to heaven ruther thun not be there. Nate has a wife who cudent tell you the name ov any Joo who ever lived in Jerusalem, but she kin giv you the family histry ov evry man, woman, and dog who ever lived within ten mild ov Ciderville. She talks like a teem runnin down hill, and tells you the same things over and over agin evry time she sees you. Sheze pizen on noo kloze and bright kullered bonnets, and wud ruther dress up and set where she cud be looked at thun talk about a nabur she was at the outs with.

Bruther Sollymun Gimps is a man with sum streaks about him that wud put you in mind ov Kurnel Soundin Brass, tho mebbe he haint so hy strung, and is a heap more keerful with his munny. He likes to be made a heap ov in meetin, and if the preecher dont kall on him to pray about evry so often it makes him look like I feel when my feet is frosted. Bruther Gimps has a purty prayer that heze ben a makin ever sense I kin remember, and it peers to do him lots ov good to git a chance to say it, tho its so turrible long that heze about the only wun in meetin who haint tired kleeer out when he gits thru with it. I dont bleeve theres anything under the sun that Sollymun ever furgits when he gits to sayin that prayer, onless it is to ask the Lord to make him a little more free handed with munny. Bruther Gimps is a man who wud also make a number wun iggszorter if his lungs was only ez good as his intenshuns, but he gits intirely out ov breth rite when he ort to be a razin the shingles. If Sollymun only had better lungs he cud do lots ov good in the Church. He pays fur his preechin in milk, and always shuts his eyes and sings with all his mite when the basket is a bein passed around in meetin.

Squire Boxwood is a man we kin alwas kount on fur anything except reddy munny. Heze a tip-top long meeter singer, and alwas makes his brags that he has served his day and gineration faithful; and I spoze mebbe he has, fur Ive never heerd nobody kounterdictt him.

Another ov our main sleepers is your unkel Pinnyrile Jinkuns, who married paps youngest sister.

He dont kum to meetin very reglar, bekoz he alwuz was a turrible feller to walk around over his place on Sundays, to see how the krops is a doin, and chink up the hog holes in the fences, and plan out work fur his hands to do on Mondays; but Pinny-rile has alwuz ben a purty good hand to pony up and help pay the preecher, tho heze sure to do a monsus site ov growlin over it afterwards.

Whenever I see Sister Peggy Damper kum to meetin a lookin chirked up and happy, I kno its bekaws sheze got two kinds ov meat in the house, fur it peers as tho her standin in the Church alwas depends a good deal on how the times is. If there wuzzent no drawbacks nur distresses in this world, and she cud alwas hav things jest like she wants um, Sister Damper wud be a monsus happy person. But the trubble is that as soon ez hard times kums in site she sez she haint sure but what the Bible was jest got up to fool foax, and that if there raaly was a Lord as good ez the preechers sez there is, he wudent let her man be out ov work so much, nur he wudent let her git so dredful skeerce ov bredstuff whenever she puts a noo dud on her back. She alwas frets a good deal when she cant hav evrything go to soot her. Jest as sure as she puts her bred in the uvvin to bake, and steps over to a naburs fur a minnit, to see whether she has heerd what they say about Mirandy Griggzes man, its sure to burn up before she gits back agin, and that makes her git evry bit as mad as she yust to do before she jined meetin. Sister Damper sez that sumtimes she gits jest about diskurridged, bekaws its sech monsus hard work to behave yourself the way the Bible

sez you must, when things dont go rite. Her no-shun is that belongin to meetin is wun thing, and keepin your dander down is anuther.

Bruther Nimrod Softsodder is as good a man in meetin as I think I ever laid eyes on, and if it cud only be so mannidged that he cud alwuz live in site ov a pull pit, Ime not sure but what it mite soon be wuth while fur sum ov the angels to kum and take lessons frum him. But the great trubble is to keep him frum backslidin on week days, while heze a raslin with the wurd barehanded in bizness matters. He kant say a dozen words in meetin hardly, before heze a weepin like a hoss a swettin, and he wants to go right over to the golden shore and make his home there; but jest as like ez not, if you hav any deelins with him the nex day, heel skin you till your marro feels chilly. Ime satisfied that he means well, but he haint wuth a huckleberry fur karryin out his intenshuns. About the only way you cud ever git him to liv rite along akordin to Skripter, thru thick and thin, meetin or no meetin, wud be to pay him more fur doin it thun he cud make in his own way.

Jim Teester is a fust rate good Church member when there haint no dances a goin on; but the trubble with Jim is that heze a ruther good fiddler, and whenever the party season kums around, the boys git after him to play fur dances, and away he goze like a kow in a buckwheat patch. It will depend a good deal on what time ov year Jim dies as to whether he will go to heaven or not. Jim is also the sextunt, and if there ever was anybody who was born fur the bizness Jim is the feller. It

kums ez natcheral fur him to hav the house bilin hot, when the preecher and evrybody else wants it kold, ez it duz fur me to want to go to meetin without a koller, and he kin kum ez ny lettin the fire go out, rite when he hadent ort to, ez anybody who ever killed a meetin with a poker. When he has the room a sizzin, and the preecher and the fokes jest wont stand it no longer, and he has to open sum ov the winders, he makes all the noise



he kin, short ov breakin the glass kleeer out. An- uthur thing that helps Jim to let all the fokes kno that heze in the meetin house is the skreechin shuze that he wears. I dont kno whether he gits um made that way a purpus or not, but it seems as tho that mutch fuss never cud git into shu lether by axident. Jim has a

dog who peers to hav a noshun in his hed that the meetin wudent be mutch akount onless he was there, and so he tends a heap more regler thun sum ov us perfessers do. He trots all over the house durin meetin time, ez tho he wanted to see fur hisself that evrybody had all the room they wanted, and sumtimes he stirs up a heap ov trubble by makin the yungsters giggle. Ive seen the preecher look at him more thun wunst as tho he wished that he was pizened. I dont kno ez Jim Teesters

boy is any wuss thun anybody elses boy, but he thinks its smart to hav two teeth out in frunt and chaw terbacker.

Sister Skybuster, the preechers wife, is a dredful hy strung womun, and ez tutchy ez a kolt that haint never had a bridle on. She haint no more like her old man in disposishun thun a churn is like a mill hopper, and she speaks her mind as free sum-times as I wud water kabbidge plants. While Bruther Skybuster hissself never disagrees with nobody about nuthin except baptism, and will take anything on quarteridge that will hold together ontill it kin be got to the passunidge, his wife haint a bit that way. and when she dont like a thing she tawks rite up and sez so without makin no bones about it. Bruther Chiller sez heze got so that heze almost afeerd to go there any more with things that he cudent sell at the grocery, and so whenever he has anything fur the passunidge that his pigs wont eat, he ginerally makes sum ov his yunguns take it up. He sez the last time he was there he tuke a bucketfull ov pickels that wuzzent spilt so very mutch, and he thawt sure the womun wud skawld him before he cud git bak into his waggin agin. It seems to me that a preechers wife ort to be more religyus than to jaw a man as old as Bruther Chiller is.

The Widder Good is a womun who washes fur a livin, but altho she is turribul poor and has a dredful hard time to git along, she peers to injoy livin in this world most as well ez sum fokes who dont hav no religyun; but mebbe thats bekoz she was tuck into the Church when she was a little gal,

and never found out no better. Sheze a womun whose face is alwuz a shinin, and weve never yit had a preecher who cud preech strong anuff to make her trimble. Theres sumthin about the way she tawks that peers to make you want to liv a hundred years yit. If she ever has any bad luck, nobody wudent never mistrust it frum the way she carries herself. Ive watched her in meetin, and Ive watched her out ov meetin, and Ive never ben able



to see a bit ov difference in her. Her face alwas looks as plezunt as trees in blossom, and I wud ruther hear her tawk thun lissen to a bran new pianner. She has to work hard fur a livin; but instid ov kumplainin about it, she alwas peers to be thankful that sheze able to do it. No matter how hard times is she never gits diskurridged,

and Ive never yit seen the baskit pass her in meetin without her puttin sumthin in it. Sheze also the fust on hand to set up with anybody thats sick, and altho sheze never able to say much in meetin, theres sumthin about her that peers to make what little she duz say mean a powerful site. Sumtimes I think I wud ruther be ez good as she is thun to hav ever so many nice things sed about me in the nuzepapers when I was on the koolin board. Sister Good is a monsus tender hearted womun, and they

say she never hears ov anybody a bein in trubble without wantin to go without things herself to help um out ov it. If I was ez keerless with munny in that way ez she is, Ike speckt Ide a ben in the poor house long ago. I bleeve in helpin foax, but my way ov doin it never kosts me any munny.

Its kurious how singler belongin to meetin works on Bruther Simun Putterbink. When heze around home he dont peer to grow in grace wuth a cent, and about all he seems to keer fur is to keep out ov jail and liv so that his naburs wont egg him; but the minnit he gits on the kars and begins to travel he gits more and more pius evry time the ingine whissels, and by the time heze a hundred miles away youde think, frum the letters he rites to his wife, that he was jest about reddy to jump into heaven. Its a grate pittty that Simun cudent be sent to the North Pole, or summers else so fur away that he cudent never git back to backslide agin. While he was in Pistulburg, Kaintucky. sum time ago, where he had gone on sum kind ov an arrant fur Kurnel Brass, he rote letters to his wife that she yust to take to klass meetin and read, to show the fokes what a dredful change there had ben in Simun. I tell you, Jess, the promises he made and the 'good resolushuns he kum to after he got the Ohio River between him and home was wunderful; they was indeed. He told his wife, in ritin that was blotted so bad that she deklared that teers had ben shed on it, that he was as sorry ez cud be that he had ever giv her a cross word, and he sed it wuzzent never a goin to happen agin. He

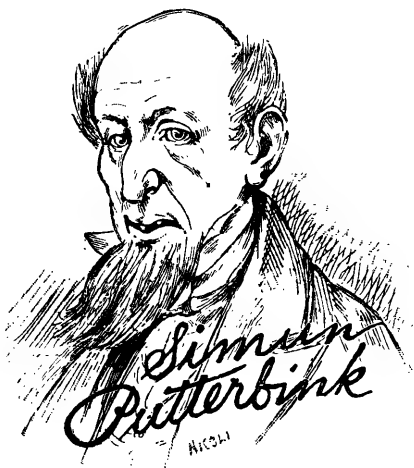
was ashamed ov hisself to think what an old bear he had alwuz ben around home, and he was a goin to quit it. Uther men mite jaw their wives and children, if they wanted to; but as fur him, he wudent. He was a goin to turn over a new leaf, and be as good at home as uther fokes was in meetin. What was the yuse ov a man belongin to Church if his wife and children dident hav no reason to be glad ov it? If a feller cudent be pleased about nuthin, what good did it do his wife fur him to be a Church member? Frum this on he was a goin to be a peaceable and luv in husbun, and foax shud find out that with him religyun meant sumthin more thun dressin up on Sunday. Hereafter uther men mite fret theirselves into a stew bekoz the pan-kakes dident taste rite and the kawphy wuzzent hot anuff, but he wudent. He had found fault with the way the pertaters was fride fur the last time, and he wudent never agin keer a pewter buttin how much sallerattus there was in the biskit. Anuther thing, he was a goin to throw away tree sprouts and trunk straps, and try luv in trainin his children after this, and if the Lord spared his onprofitable life to git home agin, his wife and yunguns shud find out that Simun Putterbink had a hart without a bit ov gravel in it. There wudent be no more growlin nur jawin dun around his house. When his children riled him he wud take um on his lap and tawk to um gentle, and when things dident go rite he wud keep kam and sing a hym, and sho fokes that he had lurnt how to behave hisself like the Good Book sed he ort to.

The longer Simun staid away the more religyus

he got, and the purtier his letters bekum. I dont think I ever seen anybody git happier away frum a kamp meetin thun his old woman did when shede read um to us. To think ov Simun not growlin about too much sallerattus in the biskit, or razin bedlum bekoz she had furgot to salt the gravy, peered to be sumthin the pore woman never expected to see in this wurld, and it wudent a tuck mutch more to hav set her to shoutin. But the very next day after Simun got home he backslid bekoz sumbody had broke the pump handle, and frum that it was an eezy matter to git into a down-rite fuss with his wife bekoz she got too much greese in the py krust, and he slapt wun ov the children fur spillin kawphy before he left the table. Before nite he whaled the whole kit ov um ontill their backs kneeded greazin with fresh butter, and got into a row with Bill Tomsun in Brasses groserly before sundown. So you see, Jess, that the relig-yⁿ Simun gits on the kars is a good deal like sum ov the fresh fish they peddle in Ciderville. It wont keep long without spilin after he gits home with it.

The next wun that Ile tell you about is Sister Plumtree. She has a good fur nuthin, wuthless husbun, whose name is Sam. Sheze ben a member ov the Church fur a long spell, and they say that sech a thing as her bein mad, or jawin a yungun, ortawkin about a nabur, or gittin into a stoo and sayin things as bitter as quinine, haint never ben knone sense she was took into full membership. Her man haint a bit akount, and drinks up evry-thing he kin git his hands on, and yit they say

sheze as pashent and gentle with him as I wud be with a sore finger, and no matter how mutch he hekters her and tries to rile her, by gittin on a spree, or goin into the house with muddy boots on, or yoozin her sizzers to cut wire with, she dont mind it a bit more thun nuthin. They say that no matter what happens, sheze alwas the same; her face a shinin and her voice not a bit snappy. But what makes it seem so monsus queer is that they



say she wuzzent born that way, as a body wud natcherally spoze she was, but that it all kum about thru her jinin meetin and gittin religyun.

She yoost to be alwas a gaddin around to dances and appul kuttins most skandlus, and them as knoze her sez that before she was bap-

tized, the way she yoost to carry on was a kawshun. She didnt peer to keer nuthin fur nobody then, and whatever kum into her mind was spit rite out, no matter who got scorched by it. You cudent go by the house any time a day then but what youde heer her a jawin like the mischuff, and the way she tawkt about her naburs was jest sumthin outlandish. Evrybody pittied Sam then, and nobody blamed him mutch fur tryin to hide his sorrer sumtimes in whisky bitters. The wunder was that he didnt git downrite

reckless and go and jine the Gipseys. But the minnit Marire got into the Church evrybody cud begin to notiss that there was a turrible difference in her behavin. She broke rite oph frum her dancin and kard playin, and quit spankin the yunguns and jawin Sam, and begun to put flowers in the winders. She also begun to set up with the sick, and soon quit spinnin street yarn, and stopt wearin finer kloze thun she cud pay fur. She also stopt takin the story papers and begun to read the Bible, and eether herself or sum ov the yunguns had to be dredful sick before shede stay at home frum meetin. It was the same about Sunday skule. She was alwuz there with her children, and it wuzzent sech a very great while before they had her a teachin all the little codgers, and she soon got evry last wun ov um to likin her like evrything. In fackt I dont think theres anybody in Ciderville to-day thats liked better by both little and big thun Sister Plumtree is. They all set mity hy by her, and there haint nobody in town who is more tawkt about thun she is, and yit nobody ever has anything but the very best kind ov good to say about her. Wherever you go, its Sister Plumtree here and Sister Plumtree there. They say that she dont find it no harder to be religyus over the wash tub, or with her hands in the doe, or with pigs in the garden, or with the babys noze a bleedin, or with the pump froze up, or the chimbly on fire, thun she duz in meetin; and Ive heerd that when the kloze line broke wun day, and let all the things kum down in the dirt, instid ov kryin herself into a fit, she gethered um up and renched um out agin, as sweet ez pye fur

brekfast, and sung hymns all the time she was a doin it.

What puzzles me is to make out how the womun mannidges to be so unkommon religyus on week days, and that too when sheze so bothered about evrything. I kin understand how peepul kin be good in meetin, and when thaire asleep, and before kumpny, and at uther times when they haint got nuthin to hekter um, bekawz at sech times it haint no more trubble fur me to behave akordin to Skripcher thun it was fur Danyel to keep frum growlin about the wether in the lions den, but its most monsus hard fur me to keep my dander down when things dont go rite. Sumtimes I think that if there wuzzent any devil I cud behave most as good ez a preecher; but about the time I git to steppin hy, and feelin proud ov my strate walkin, jest that very minnit sumthin is sure to turn up that makes me furgit that I ever jined meetin, and it peers as tho I kin tawk faster and say more to be sorry fur in two minnits, whenever sech is the kase, thun I wud do in a whole week at kamp meetin.

But I most furgot to tell you about Grandaddy Nucks, who is nearly ez reglar about goin to meetin as Jim Teesters dog is. To go to meetin and not see the old man there, as klost to the preecher ez he kin git, with his ear trumpet pinted strate at the pull pit, wud make a body feel as tho things hadent got started rite. He never goze to meetin tho but what he goze home disappointed, bekaws, akordin to his say, they dont hav nuthin any more like they yust to hav it in the good old times when he was a

yunker. He sez that they yust to hav meetins then that was meetins, and preechin that was preechin, and singin that was singin, but its got so now that all sech things has run down skandlus. When he was yung sech nonsense as puttin orguns and bugle horns and fiddles into our meetin houses hadent never ben thawt ov, and this thing ov havin singin dun so that a body cudent tell whether it was Dutch or Chocktaw, was sumthin that wudent a ben stood fur a minnit in them days. And theres another thing that wurries the old feller purty ny ez mutch as his noo teeth duz, and thats this thing ov hangin up pikchers ov Bible things in the meetin house fur the yunguns to look at in the Sunday skule. He sez that all Skripcher is pint blank aginst it, and akordin to his noshun its that very thing that makes sum fokes have so turribul mutch bad luck in this wurld. If it haint stopt before long the old man sez heze about made up his mind that hele stop payin quarteridge, bekaws it hurts him wuss thun luzin sleep to think ov his munny a bein waisted in any sech way. How duz anybody kno but what its puttin pikchers in the meetin house that makes times so hard and fokes so sickly?



Bruther Jason Patch is a man who finds it tur-

ribul hard to git mutch satisfackshun out ov his religyun on week days. He gits so on Sundays that he kin purty ny see what is a goin on in hevvin, but he is so wurried and bothered and pestered along toards the middle ov the week that it jest about peers to him sumtimes as tho there hadent never ben a solitary Bible printed. He sez it haint a bit ov trubbul fur him to git to feelin ez lite ez air in a klass meetin, but his old womun gits to be so aggrervatin around home sumtimes, and evrybody else hekturs him so bad, that it peers ez tho he was a sinkin down in the mire kleeer up to his armpits, and about evry so often he gits squshed down so kumplete that its all he kin do to keep frum goin strate to his preecher and havin his name skrated out. Bruther Patch thinks that if it cud only be fixt so that he cud stay in meetin all the time he cud git to hevvin ez easy as turnin your hand over; but as he kant do it, sumtimes he feels dredful joobus about the way things will finally turn out with him. Heze ben wurried in that way so long that whenever he tawks now he duz it in a whine which makes you feel ez mizable as tho wun ov your hosses was ded. Did you ever notiss, Jess, what a monsus site ov difference there is in the voices ov peepul any how? Sum ov um chirks you up, and makes you feel as tho you wudent stir a step if you was to see a duzzin bulldogs a kummin, while uthers peer to distress you so that you wudent hardly be willin to go out ov doors to see it rain munny.

Davy Gloom, our Ciderville undertaker, is a man who takes a heap ov interest in peepul who git sick

anuff to be kunsidered dangerous. As soon as anybody gits tuke down raal bad, it haint two days before Unkel Davy gits to be a mity good nabur, and frum that on he looks after um most as klost ez the doktor duz; and the wuss they git the more sollum he gits ontill after the funeril is over with. Last week Semanthy was sick most all the week so bad that she was bedfast, and the fust thing we knode Davy droppt in on his tiptoze, with a little jar ov sum kind ov perzurves that his wife had sent down fur the old womun to take her medasun in. The site ov him so skeert her that she was tuke with a chill that made her shiver; but he tawked so nice and kumphertin that she soon furgot all about what bizness he was in, and got as kam as cud be. Davy has the name ov bein a dredful kind man durin sickness; but they say he dont hav a grane ov mercy on a body as soon as the breth is out ov um, and fur evrything he duz to help lay a korps away to rest he charges as reckless ez destrukshun. Sumtimes Ive wundered why it is that we lock men up fur stealin in the reglar way, and yit dont never pass no laws against the undertakin bizness. Davy is a plezzunt anuff man in meetin, but when heze around, dyin is a turribul seeryus matter. They say it cost Steve Mahooly more to bury his wife thun it wud take to ride on the kars frum here to Ingunopolis and bak home agin and pay your tavern bill, and yit Steve has never ben what you wud kall a very forehanded persun.

Jooly Ann Dooly and Marthy Persimmon are both turribul energetic gals fur helpin to stoo oysters or make ice kreem, or helpin to sell berries and

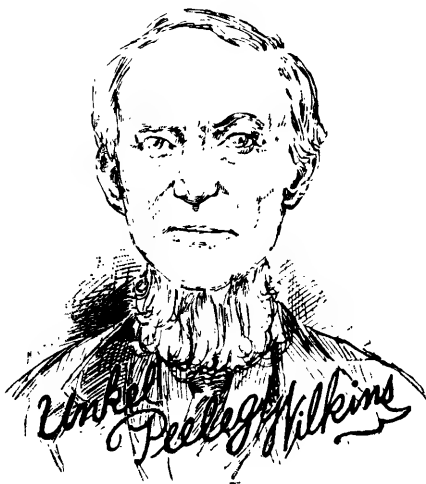
kake fur moren thaire wuth, to keep the meetin house a goin; but thave ben disappointed rite smart bekoz nobody haint never yit tuke a noshun in downrite airnest to marry um, so our gals sez. Thaire not sech bad lookin gals tho, neether wun ov um, but I dont bleeve thaire very good workers; and ov korse no man wants to marry a wife who haint a goin to be nuthin but a bill ov expense to him. Another reesun why it takes um so long to find theirselves pardners is, that I hear old wimmin a sayin evry wunst in awhile that there haint mutch yuse fur anybody else to hav any hopes ov gittin married ez long as them Hackelberry gals stays single, bekoz thaire alwas on the lookout fur evry feller that kums along who is wuth havin, and their muther is sech a fust klass match maker that she knoze jest how to mannidge things. Sheze married oph five gals alreddy now, and I shud think men wud soon begin to git a little shy ov her.

CHAPTER II.

THE PREACHER'S SALARY.

The Stewards' Meeting.

THIS last yeer has ben a turribul strainin time on us about payin our preecher, fur altho sum ov us has dun our part faithful all the yeer thru, theres some ov the uthers that haint dun nuthin but growl and spunge their preechin; and so take it altogether, I tell you, its ben tuff. If it was only the fashun to hav our preechin dun fur nuthin, like they yust to do in the days ov the possuls and proffuts, there wud be sum satisfakshun in belongin to meetin, but when a body has to be kep in a stew all the time about the preechers munny, its desperit hard to be religyus. Bruther Skybuster is a good man—a raal good man in sum ways, but heze most as hard to winter as a flock ov sheep with the foot rot; and when his wages dont kum as free as he wants um to, he has



a way ov tawkin pittiful and lookin sollum that makes it mity hard work fur sum ov us to keep our hands in our pockets.

When he fust kum amungst us the stewards got together to tawk about what they wud low him, and fix a price that he was to try to airn by his preechin. Unkel Peeleg Wilkins had heerd that the preecher had a little munny a drawin interest, which his wifes pap had willed her, and he sed it peered to him that they ort to be very keerful not to pay him sò mutch that they would spile him. He sed that it was a dredful dangerous thing fur a preecher to handle mutch munny ov his own, and that the Lord wud be sure to hold us akountable if we sot sech stumblin blocks as that before our pastors. It was the duty ov Church members to do all they cud to keep their preechers humble, and the surest way to do that, he had dis-kivered, was to keep um in need ov munny. A preecher with sumthin in the bank was a turribul hard man to mannidge and hold level. His preechin was sumtimes nearly as resky as lytnin. You cudent tell where it wud hit nur how hard it wud strike. A preecher ov that kind was as liable to say things that wud keep a man frum gittin happy in meetin as the moon was to full in August; consekwently he thawt it was their bounden duty not to think ov payin Bruther Skybuster more than four hundred dollars a yeer, to begin with anyhow. He thawt that wud be the hiest ov plenty, and if they found out that it was too mutch, and there was danger ov the preecher gittin rich on it faster than they wanted him to, it wudent be so very hard fur them to kut it down sum, or only pay part ov their quarteridge,

That was more thun Pawl and Silas got, the old man sed, and if he had red his Bible strate, they had hed a monsus site tuffer time in gittin around over their sirkuts thun ever he wud hav over hizzen, tho it must be owned up that ours was bad anuff when the water was hy and the rodes was muddy. But jest then Isum Klover he got up, and sed that instid ov four hundred he wud be in fur makin it twice that, even if he had to go without sugar in his kawphy to help raze it; and fur quite a bit it lookt as tho about the fust job the preecher wud hav, wud be to preech the funeril ov Unkel Peeleg; fur as Isum sed eight hundred the old feller immejutly turned the kuller ov a kold pankake all over his hed and klear down his neck, and sum ov us that had seen him hav sech spells before, knode that if he didnt git to the town pump in mity short meeter he wud die in his trax with hart stoppidge; but as luck would hav it he didnt stop to answer Isum, but grabbed up his hat and kane and went out with so mutch vim that he nearly fell down over Jim Teesters boy, who was a playin marbles on the sidewalk.

Before the old feller cud get hisself stiddied down kam anuff to tawk without his teeth a flyin out, and git bak into meetin agin, Isum Klover had got it karried thru that the preecher was to hav six hundred dollars a yeer, and to raze the munny it was decided that the members shud each wun be sessed so mutch, which they was to pay to the stewards evry three munts.

Before I cud hardly tell what kuller my hair was, they had jabbed me down fur twenty dollars

a yeer, and jest the thawts ov it purty ny sent me over to the pump to jine Unkel Peeleg. But altho it ginerally makes my throte git as dry as a pepperbox to tawk in meetin, I didnt hav any more trubble in speakin my mind jest then thun I wud at a shootin match. I told um I jes cudent stand it to pay sech an outrajus price as that, the way times was, fur anything that I didnt jest hav to hav. I sed it wud ruin me to be robbed like that evry three munts; and when they saw I was so strung up about it that they dassent press it without runnin the resk ov makin me bakslide, they agreed to kut it down to sixteen, and I kunkluded it mite go at that.

They also klapt Isum Clover down fur twenty dollars, altho he haint wuth nuthin ny what I am; but instid ov his kallin fur a rebate, and savin hisself anuff to keep a dog or so, as I dun, what does the blockhed do but git up as kam as py krust and tell um he wuzzent satisfied with what thade sessed him, and then when evry body was lookin as surprised as they cud be, he up and told um they could dubble it. Thats jest what he dun, and yit sum how or uther I cant see no sines ov his bein in danger ov havin to go to the poor house; but if I was to be haff as reckless as that I kno sumthin dredful wud happen to me.

They was most afeerd to put Unkel Peeleg down fur twelve dollars, but they finally dun it, while he was still at the pump, and when he kum in and found it out he looked as tho he had swallowed sumthin and had jest found out that it was pizen. Bruther Sollymun Gimps was sot down fur

fifteen dollars, in spite of his groans and looks ov mizry, and several uthers, who own their own farms, ketched it in the same perporshun.

Knowin that the Widder Good, who washes fur a livin, is alwas willin, I seggested that they put her down fur ten dollars, and they dun so. Bruther Soundin Brass sed that if the figgers was a goin to be published in the Ciderville Skorpion they cud put him down fur fifty dollars, but if they wuzzent they needent kount on him fur more thun fifteen or twenty. His wife afterwards told the stewards she wud giv um ten dollars out ov her own pocket, but she dident peer to keer about havin um tell the Kurnel about it. Semanthy sez sheze ben a noticin fur sum time that Sister Brass is purty ny ez recklesa about givin as Isum Klover is. She sez she has it strate frum the Widder Tanner, that evry wunst in awhile the Kurnels wife goze without bonnet fixups and so on, and gives away what thade kost to help along sumthin that she bleeves is religyus. Ive alwuz knode that Sister Brass was a dredful good womun, but I dident hav no idee that she was as deep sot on bein good as that. Its a grate pitty that there haint a few more like her and Isum a belongin to our meetin, bekoz if there only was the burden wud be a good deal lighter fur me and sum more ov um.

But when the stewards finally got evry body sessed, and kum to figger up what it amounted to, they found it wud be right smart more than what the preechers wages wud be, and ov kourse evry body thawt we wud git along swimmin, and I spoze mebbe we wud if there hadent ben so many things

gone against us. In the fust place, sum ov the fokes we had down fur rite smart, either moved away or jined the Prisbyterians, and uthers bakslid, and uthers wudent pay bekoz the preecher hadent suited um, and then fur anuther thing Bruther Skybuster dident hav no revival as hede ort to hav dun, to fill up the meetin-house with fokes who wudent be so skeert about payin out a little munny as sum ov um is. Rite when he ort to hav ben able to lift the kushun oph ov the pull pit with his preechin, he had to ketch kold and git so mutch trubble with his throte that the meetins had to be stopt before hede tuke in more thun a haff a duzzin jiners; and so weeve had it up hill all the yeer thru in tryin to raze his wages.

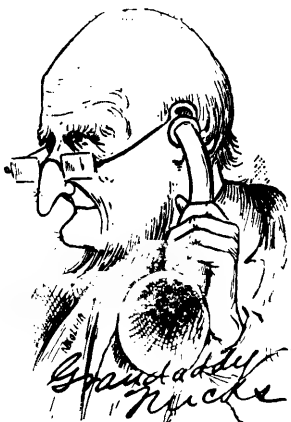
When the time kum fur him to go to Konpherence we found that, in spite ov all the krooked cord wood, and bleached hay, and meezly hams, and diskurridged apple sass, and soured mullassiz, and partly hatched eggs, and sech uther stuff as we had been able to saddle on to him without drivin him kleer crazy, we was still behind with him thirty-seven dollars and twenty-nine cents, even after we charged him with the things we took to the donation party, and five dollars in munny that a stranger had giv him.

• The Widder Tanner and sum more ov um went at it and got up an ice kreem supper to try to raze this; but instid ov doin it, behold you, they kum out behind, and run us in dett nine dollars and twelve cents more, and so what to do we dident kno; but we finally kunkluded that the preecher had better report that we was square with him, so that evry

thing wud look all rite in the Minnits, and then we cud raze it sum how or uther durin the yeer, when we wuzzent pressed; and thats the way we fixt it.

Hard Times for Brother Skybuster.

After the ice kreem doins that I tole you about, we had purty much evry thing else we cud think ov, that we thawt there was any show at all ov makin any munny out ov, frum a pop korn party to a wax figger purseedin that was most ez good as anything I ever seen at a sirkus; but no matter what we went at, there peered to be a bad run of luck against us, and altho we gethered in more or less munny, still when the bills fur the expenses was all pade oph, there wuzzent hardly anuff left to shute at. Isum Klover and the Widder Good was both in fur goin rite at it, and razin the munny by takin it out ov our own pockets, but jest the idee ov it skeert sum ov our members so dredful bad that they haint ben bak to meetin sense. I dont kno whats a goin to bekum ov us, Jess, if old Isum kēeps on a tawkin ez reckless about munny as heze ben a doin here lately, fur its preshus little kumphert sum ov us wheel hosses gits in meetin any more when heze there. The feller dont peer to think no more ov takin up a kullekshun thun I do ov goin without my dinner when Ime in town all day. Heze most as reddy to give his change away as I am to drink buttermilk.



Well, ez it seemed as tho the munny wuzzent to be razed by fare means nur fowl, wun day me and Squire Boxwood got to tawkin about matters and things, and all at wunst it popped into our heds how we cud git shut ov the whole bizness, and make it easy pullin fur all ov us next year, and the way ov it was to git the stewards together and cut down the preechers wages to five hundred dollars. And so we broached it to Unkel Peeleg and Grandaddy Nucks and Bruther Gimps and a few more ov um, and they was all right in fur it as keen as cud be. So we had a meetin and told the preecher what we had kunkluded to do about it, but to our bewunderment he objected to it like sixty. In a voice that was all in a trimble he sed it wud jest neerly starve him to deth to have to git along on any less thun hede ben a gittin, and he didnt see how he cud do it. He sed that by the time he pade a hundred dollars house rent, and kep his hoss, and bawt kloze fur the family, and pade fur his blacksmithin and shoe mendin, and giv the Lord his tenth, there wudent be mutch left to buy vittles with, and so he kicked like all possesst aginst havin his wages cut down any at all.

When the preecher sot down, Bruther Sollymun Gimps got up, and blowin his nose till it kracked like a pistle, he sed that preechers was altogether too extravagant in their ways and noshuns. He sed it had got so that a preecher didnt think he was dresst up onless he cud be a gittin a new suit ov kloze evry three or four yeers, and their wives was a good deal wuss about sech things thun they was. He had knode sum ov um who was ez per-

tickler about their bonnets as he was about how his hosses was fed. He sed that he wore his weddin kloze fur Sunday ontill after he had grone up children, and he mite a wore um longer, he thawt, if he hadent a got so stout they was too small fur him; and so he cud tell frum his own experience that there wuzzent no use ov anybody a puttin all their wages on their backs. Preechin wuzzent ny as strainin on kloze as farmin was, and if preechers was keerful they needent hardly miss what it tuke to keep um a lookin well.

There was anuther thing he had notist, and that was that Missus Skybuster was not a savin woman in a kitchen, as evry preechers wife ort to be. Wun day, when he had fetched a kuppel ov bushels ov turnips on quarteridge, he had staid at the passunidge fur his dinner, bekoz he didnt keer about goin up town and wastin munny fur krackers and cheese; and when he kum to set down to the table, lo and behold you, there was beef stake! He sed they cudent afford to eat beef stake at his house, and it kunjered him like all six to make out how the preecher cud do it.

As Bruther Gimps told um this, in a voice as sollum as musik in a grave yard, Unkel Peeleg and Grandaddy Nucks both shook their heds ez tho the nooze hurt um bad; but I didnt tell um that Jim Teesters wife had told Semanthy that Bruther Skybuster had to borry the munny ov Jim to buy that beef stake with, coz the day Bruther Gimps tuke dinner at the passunidge they was kleeer out ov evrything, as kumplete as if they had jest ben a havin anuther donashun party.

When Bruther Gimps sot down, Unkel Peeleg he got up, and stiddyin hisself on his kane, and drawin in his upper lip to keep his teeth frum slip-pin, he sed there wuzzent no two ways about it, preechers wages was most monsus dredful hy, and ez fur him he cudent see why they should be that way. Preechers all pertended that they liked the bizness, and if they did he cudent see why they shud be pade away up into the nines fur doin it. He cud git a feller to break stone, evry day in the week, fur a dollar a day and board hisself, and be glad ov the chance; and evrybody knode there was more hard work in brakin stone a week thun there was in all the preechin a man wud do durin a whole pertrackted meetin, to say nuthin ov its bein about ez hard on kloze as most anything a body cud go at. While Unkel Peeleg was a tawkin, Grandaddy Nucks kep his ear trumpit stuck into his ear ez tite as he cud stick it, and he never lost a word. I tell you, Jess, the way the old man kep his hed a noddin and his face a smilin, as tho he had jest heerd that sumbody was a kummin to pay him munny, was about as purty a site as I ever seen outside ov a barn yard.

Unkel Peeleg was furdere more in favor ov payin preechers akordin to the size ov their families. He sed he cud mind the time when a preecher only got eighty dollars a yeer fur hisself ontill he married, and then he got anuther eighty fur his kumpanyun, and as his family got bigger he was allowed so mutch a hed fur each child that kum into it. Lookin at it on these grounds, it was ez plain to him as a mules ears, he sed, that Bruther Skybuster wud be

a gittin well pade if they didnt giv him no more thun haff what they pade Bruther Gunflint, who had eight children, while Bruther Skybuster didnt hav but wun. That peered to suit old Grandaddy Nucks more thun anything that had ben sed yit, and he nodded his hed so hard that he shuk his spex oph and broke wun ov the glasses out. Unkel Peeleg went on to say that there was no gittin around it but what Bruther Skybuster was ez good a preecher as we had ever had on the sirkut, and in sum ways he was ruther better thun sum ov um; but as his family was so small, he hadent ort to expect to be pade like sum uther preechers had ben.

As soon ez he cud git the floor, Isum Klover kleered his throte, and sed it was a skandlus shame, the way we was a tryin to take advantage ov the preecher. He sed we was in dett to him ez kleeer as anything cud be, and he cudent see why the preecher cudent sue us, and kullett all that we had promised to pay him, if he shud take a noshun to do it. He sed that fur his part he cudent see the difference between killin a preecher with a shot gun, rite outrite, and puttin him out ov his mizry all at wunst and be dun with it, and this here thing ov starvin him to deth by inches, as we peered to be ded set on tryin to do; and he didnt bleeve the Lord cud see no difference nuther, and it was his noshun that it wud make a good deal ov trubble fur sum ov us on the judgment day, if we karried out all the meanness toards Bruther Skybuster that we was a tryin to do. He sed that jest the bare thawts ov bein as klose with a man who broke fur us the

bred ov life ez we wud be with a feller who broke stone fur our hosses to walk on, was anuff to make angels never want to look at the earth agin. When old Isum wunst gits fairly warmed up, I tell you, Jess, it peers to me he kin say things that fairly siz.

He sed that the idee ov payin a man akordin to the size ov his family wud be a nice rule to go by, and he lowed mebbe hede better stop on his way home and see Unkel Peelegs hired hand, who has thirteen children, and advise him to begin chargin fur evry last wun ov his yunguns while he had sech a good chance. Isum sed he hed alwuz ben dredful keerless on this pint, fur whenever he went to a shu shop to git his butes tapt, he hadent never thawt it wuth while to look around fur a man who dident have more thun a chile or so to do the job fur him; but if the family rule was to go into force, fokes with a whole drove ov yunguns wudent git mutch kustim out ov him after this. He shud hav to change his blaksmith, and git anuther doktor rite away, he thawt, and he was afeered he shud hav to go kleeer over to Shakeville to git his hoss medasun, bekaws the drug store keepers in Ciderville all had too many children fur him; and in these times it stood a body in hands to buy frum a batcheler evry chance they got, even tho they did hav to wear out rite smart more shu lether to git to him. And then, if that was to be the rule, whats the reasun it wudent work on farmers as well as uther peepul? When a man hawled his wheat to market wud the price depend on how many plates there was on his dinner table; and how mutch less wud a kaff be

wuth that had ben razed by a yung man, thun wun that was fetched to markit by an old grandaddy that most evrybody in the township was sum akin to? If the tole on a turnpike depended on how many children the president ov the kumpny had, or how many yunguns the feller who owned the teem was the father ov, what a turribul time there wud be in makin change at the tole gate! Let Unkel Peeleg hav his way, and a man wud hav to karry a family Bible under his arm wherever he went, to show how many children he had, before he cud git a decent price fur anything.

Anuther thing that Isum sed that made rite smart ov dodgin in the meetin was, that it was a poor rule that wudent work both ways. If the fokes who had the biggest families was to git the biggest pay, whats the reasun they shudent be the very wuns that shud do the most payin; and if that was the kase, Unkel Peeleg ort to pay jest five times as mutch as he did toards supportin the preecher, bekoz his family was jest that mutch bigger thun Isums, and yit Isum pays forty dollars a yeer, all in munny, while Unkel Peeleg dont pay but twelve in chips and whetstones.

As Isum sed this, the old feller grabbed his hat and kane, and struck out fur the town pump a little quicker thun I ever seen him start before, with Bruther Sollymun Gimps and Jim Teesters dog rite after him, and evry uther man who had a good many children begun to look as tho the meetin cudent let out any too soon fur him. Anuther thing that Isum dun was to show by sum figgers that he made on the Sunday-skule blakbord, so big

that evrybody in the house cud see um, that kuttin down the preechers wages a hundred dollars a yeer wud be a savin ov jest eighteen and three quarter cents apiece to each member on the sirkut; which he perceded to show wud amount to rite smart by the judgment day, pervided it didnt kum fur a thousand yeers or so yit. It duz peer to me, Jess, that that feller kin find more ways to run a bean pole kleeer thru a body thun any man I ever seen in all my life. But in spite ov all Isum and a few uthers who sided with him cud do against it, we finally karried it thru, and voted that the preechers wages shudent only be five hundred dollars this yeer; and so thats what heze to git, if he kin kullekt it.

Some Plain Talk from Isum Klover.

In my letter last week I didnt git quite thru tellin you about the meetin we had to cut down the preechers wages. I bleeve when I wound up, Isum Klover had the floor, and was keepin sum ov the members on the jump ez keen as a kross eyed man cud hav dun it with a shot gun. Among uther things he jest about as good ez sed that sum fokes wud stand a middlin brisk chance, sum ov these days, ov havin a ruther hard time ov it on the judgment day fur the way they treated their preechers in munny matters. He sed he never cud make out why it was that sum fokes wud treat their dogs middlin decent, and yit be so tuff on their preechers. I dont think Ive ever seen old Isum so stirred up as he was that mornin. As the old feller talkt up fur the preechers with all his

mite, the tears run down his cheeks more thun wunst, and two or three times his voice got so thick that it was ez mutch as he cud do to purseed any furer. He sed he wud purty ny as soon think ov tellin his wife how mutch she shud eat as to undertake to jew the preecher down to jest barely anuff to keep soul and body together.

He told us about the dredful long, tryin, six weeks that his boy laid so low with the typoid fever; and ov how faithful Bruther Skybuster had ben to kum to see um nite and day, no matter how bad the wether was, nur how mutch he had to do. He never stopt kummin, as most ov the naburs did, fur fear he wud ketch the fever, nur he didnt stay away when he was tired and haff sick hisself; nur he didnt kum jest to be a kummin eether; but he kum bekaws his own hart was full ov feelin fur um, and he wanted um to kno that as long ez he was able to git around they had a frend in him who wudent fail um:



And then Isum went on to say, with a trimblin voice, that sum how or uther when he did kum, it alwas peered as tho he brot sumthin frum hevin with him, fur the sick room seemed ez tho it lightened up as soon as he stept into it, and every time he opened the Bible it was alwas to read sumthin so kumfortin that it made um all feel stronger and

better, and more resigned to whatever mite happen, and the sick boy was sure to git easier rite away; and then in his prayers, Isum sed, it alwas peered that hevvin was so close by that jest a step wud take you into it, and it wuzzent no longer the fur away place that it yust to be. In phact, Isum sed, that evry timè the preecher kum into their sorrowful home he brot sumthin with him that no munny cud have bought; and then when at last his poor boy had died, and it peered as tho they was in sech darkness that lite cudent never git to them no more, the words that the preecher had spoke at the funeral had seemed to kum like a voice from the uther side ov the grave, and as they held back their tears to listen to the words he red to them from the blessed Book, a peace had kum into their harts that nuthin else on earth cud hav giv, and altho they cudent understand why it had to be that their boy had to be tuke away, yit they was able to trust it all to God, and praise him thru their tears, fur they knode that he was good, and that he loved them a million times more thun they had loved their boy.

And this was the man, Isum sed, that we wanted to put on to starvation wages, and treat as tho he wuzzent any more akount than a man who cudent do nuthin but break stone with a sledge hammer. Was it a stone breaker that we wanted when our wives was sick, or when our children was a dyin? Cud a man who hadent nuthin but mussel to rek-omend him do us any good when there was krape on the door? What cud a dornick squsher do to keep our boys and gals frum goin lickaty kut toards the bad place? Cud a sand sifter do our baptizin

and marryin fur us? How mutch consolation wud it be to us when we was at the pint ov deth ourselves, to have a feller kum in with a fist as big as a kabbidge hed and tawk to us about the wether? How many ov us wud be willin to die with nobody but a stone pounder to hold the lite fur us when we kum to shut our eyes fur the last time? Wudent it be kumfortin to kno that a man who could lift a barl ov cider wud tell the naburs what he knode about us after we was gone? Who wud want to hav his korps started fur the graveyard frum a stone quarry? or who wud want to hav a rock breaker see after his family when the time kum fur his tume stone to be sot up? When there was sickness in the house, and when deth was a nockin at the door, it wuzzent a man with a sledge hammer that we wanted, Isum sed, but sumbody who knode how to find lites in the Bible that wudent never go out, and who cud talk to God and tell him all about our trubbles. The preecher had to do a thousand things fur us that took time, and edikashun, and religyun, that we never thawt ov hardly thankin him fur.

In phact, Isum sed, he could call to mind when wun ov the leadin members ov the church had sent fur the preecher to kum home frum kamp meetin to preech the funiril ov wun ov his children, and he had dun it, altho he hadent mutch more than got there when the dispatch arrived, and his expenses in gittin there was as good as throwed away; but besides all that, it had kost him about eight dollars to git bak agin in a hurry, and in doin it he had ketched kold by bein out in the rain, and had

lost two weeks with sickness hisself, besides havin sumthin ov a doktor bill to pay; and yit the man who sent fur him never thawt it wuth while to even thank him fur kummin, and that same man was now one ov the foremost wuns in tryin to cut down his wages to the starvashun pint, altho he was rich anuff to support a preecher hisself, in number wun order, and out of his own pocket, and hardly feel it. As Isum sed this Bruther Sollymun Gimps looked as tho the ground was a givin away under him; and as he went on to say that if all ov us treated our stone pounders like sum ov us treeted our preechers, it wudent be long ontill we wud evry last wun ov us hav to travel in the mud or never go any where in wet weather, it lookt as tho Unkel Peeleg Wilkins and Bruther Kalup Chiller was both on the pint ov runnin a foot race fur the town pump, while Grandaddy Nucks jerked the speakin trumpet out ov his ear and never listened to anuther solitary word that Isum sed, ontill he cud see by the looks on the uthers faces that he was agin tawkin about sumthin that didnt have no vinegar in it.

I dont kno how Squire Boxwood felt, but I must say, Jess, that while Isum was a blazin away rite and left, I begun to feel as tho I had ashes in my mouth and cudent git shut ov um, fur he put me in mind more thun wunst ov sum things that preechers had dun fur our family that we cudent hav got a feller to do with a krobar. But you see, the thing ov it is this, that the Lord expects us to keep preechers humble, and the only way to do that on the Ciderville Sirkut that we kno ov, is to git um as poor ez Jobes turkey to begin with, and then keep um

that way ; and Krischun duty ov that kind is sumthin that a good 'many ov us is reddy to live rite up to without shirkin ; and so, in spite ov all Isum cud say, we karried our pint, as I told you in my last letter, and Bruther Skybusters wages is to be only five hundred dollars this year, instid ov the six hundred he thawt he was a goin to git last yeer, but dident quite do it.

But the thing that I sot out to tell you was, what a splendid thing it was fur me that they had that meetin, and dun ez they did do, bekaws its a goin to be the means ov savin me anuff to keep a pig or so at the very least, and I lurnt a good while ago that its by savin munny that a body gits ahed in this world, and has sumthin on hands to make supe out ov in rainy wether. As Unkel Peeleg sez, theres nuthin in the Bible to show that it ever kost the dyin thief a solitary cent fur meetin purposiz, and yit it sez as kleeer ez a gun shot that he went as strate to the glory world as a bird cud fly ; and if thats the kase I cant make out why I shud hav to jest about as good ez chop my fingers oph to git to hevvin ; and so if theres a chance to git thru without purty ny havin to plaster my way with munny, why thats the rode Ime a goin to try to travel on, and Ime not the only wun in our meetin who thinks that way nuther.

I hadent mutch more thun got home and put the hosses up on the day ov the stewards meetin, before it popped into my hed so suddint that I most ketched my breth in thinkin about it, that ez we wuzzent to pay the preecher full price this year there wuzzent no more sense in my payin ez mutch as they sesst

against me last year thun there wuz in havin per-serves on the table when you haint got kumpny; and so I kunkluded that I wudent stand but twelve dollars this year, instid ov the sixteen thave ben a gougin out ov me; and furdernore, I kunkluded that I wud try my levelest to see if I cudent pay it all in sumthin that we wud most ez soon giv away any how, and in that way git kleeer ov any needcessity ov havin to part with very mutch reddy munny; so a kupple ov days afterwards I went up to the passunidge and left um a kupple ov dollars wuth ov sassidge that Semanthy had purty ny spilt kumplete by gittin altogetther two mutch hoss reddish into it, and so hit a good lick toards havin nuthin fur the stewards to pester me about at quarterly meetin time.

As I was on my way to town I run akrost Bruther Sollymun Gimps, who was out in a feeld next to the rode, a lookin fur a hoss shoe that wun ov his krittters had dropt. I told him what I had kunkluded to do about my quarteridge, and he declared, with a look as pleasant as walkin into a bank to draw munny, that he wud do the very same thing about hizzen, and so he sed if I wud wait a bit till he cud go to the barn and git his wommus, and a chunk of bakun frum sum that he had in the smoke house that didnt smell jest rite, he bleeved hede git in the spring waggin and ride up to the passunidge along with me, and do his part toards eazin the mind ov the preecher fur the time bein, anyhow.

As me and Bruther Gimps rode along toards the passunidge, he told me that he was worried a most to deth bekaws we didnt hav no revival. He sed

that his yunguns was a gittin so desperit onruly that there wuzzent hardly no livin with um, onless he was all the time a klubbin their lives haff out, and he sed if we didnt soon hav sech a stirrin up that sum ov um wud git religyun and lurn to behave therselves, he shud go in fur lettin Bruther Skybuster go, and git us anuther preecher. He sed there was preechers who cud have a revival evry whipstitch and not haff try, and they didnt hav to be pade any more thun ours was nuther. Brother Gimps said it was his onbiased noshun that our pastor wuzzent ez energetic as he ort to be fur the way we pade him, and it was a dredful sollum phakt that he hed let the sirkut slide down like all six, speshly in spiritile matters. Religyun with us didnt mean what it yust to do when Bruther Gunflint was on the sirkut. He had hed his failins, ov korse, as purty nigh all preechers most ginerally has, but he wudent never a stood it to see Jooly Ann Dooley a wearin ez many bloo artyfishals on her bonnet as sheze got to doin, without doin sum mity pinte preechin about it; nur neether wud he hav let the Sunday skule run fur munts without givin the yunguns a tawk that wud skeer sum ov um so ny to deth that they wud try to behave therselves fur awhile at any rate. In his judgment, Bruther Gimps sed, that what we needed most as bad ez we did rainy wether was more she bear tawk in the Sunday skule. What he wanted was fur preechers to make more noise and say more about brimstone in the pull pit. Akordin to his noshun no man was kalled to preech in ded airnest who cudent now and then wawk into a Sunday skule and skeer the yunguns

so bad that sum ov um wud stutter fur weeks afterwards, and make it middlin safe fur a farmer to undertake to raze water mellins without havin to keep a feller a watchin um with a gun. What we needed to git up a revival that wud do to brag on, was more ov the good old fashuned kind ov preechin that he was razed on; preechin that had more of a red hotness to it thun the milk and water sarmints we hav to put up with in these times. We need preechin that will make children afeerd to go to bed in the dark a good deal wus thun we do better lamps in our meetin houses, he thawt. Wunst git a boy to beleeve that lytnin is liable to strike him if he dont behave hisself, and it wont take haff as mutch whalin to make him stop suckin eggs and tearin his kloze with meanness as its a gittin to do amungst us.

If Bruther Skybuster wud only preech so that evry bodys yunguns wud be a good deal feerder when its a thunderin thun they are, Bruther Gimps lowed he wudent hav ny the trubble with hizzen that he duz hav. He sed that he cud remember wun sarmint that he heerd when he was about seven years old that had skeert him so bad that he didnt hardly grow nun fur a yeer or so, and he cudent mind as he had ever stole a blessed thing sense then; and in them times, he sed, they yust to have revivals that wud make evry body in a township feel jest about certun that the judgment day wud be sure to kum before harvest. Why cudent we do it now? It was as plain to him as a hoe handle that wun ov the main reezuns was bekoz theres a gittin to be too mutch cheerful singin and tawkin in our Sunday

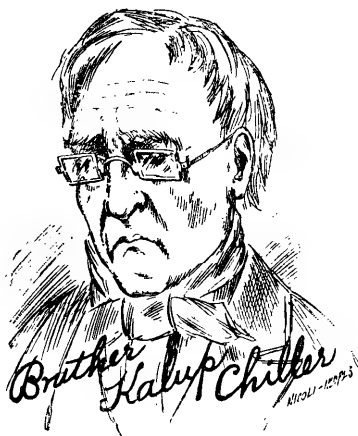
skules. As long ez you lowed yunguns to go to a meetin house and enjoy therselves there, it didnt do mutch good fur old peepul to strane therselves in tryin to look sollum, and this thing ov puttin in flowers and muzick, and pikters, and so on, at sech a turribul rate as Sunday skules is a gittin to do, is a dredful sober thing to think about. While sech things ez that was dun, Bruther Gimps lowed it wud alwas be monsus hard work to git up a revival.

Cutting Down their Quarterage.

Sum how or uther the word soon got skattered all over the sirkut that me and Bruther Sollymun Gimps had kunkluded to kut down our quarteridge, and it was jest too kurius to see how purty ny evrybody else follered our egzampel ez quick as wun sheep wud go thru a gap after anuther wun. The fust time I seen Unkel Peeleg afterwards, his face had shortened up most amazin, and he cudent a looked mutch happier if hede a found a hens nest with a duzzin eggs in it. Last yeer, you mind, the stewards had sessed him twelve dollars, and altho he mannidged to settle the biggest part ov it in truck and dicker, without hardly givin the preecher a chance to look at his munny, he was all the time makin his kumplaints that he found it monsus hard work to injoy religyun more thun haff as mutch as he yust to; but when he kum to hear that me and Bruther Gimps had shrunk our quarteridge down to a reasunable pint, he trimmed down hizzen to nine dollars a yeer a good deal quicker thun you ever seen the sun set, and the doin ov it made him

feel so good that he sez it will be a mirakle if our meetin house dont soon hav a revival.

Unkel Peeleg has got a hired hand, by the name ov Joe Bannister, who dont never hav no more mercy on hosses thun I wud hav on a pankake, and if Bruther Skybuster wud only git at it in ded air-nest, as he ort to do, and stir up things so brisk that Jo wud hav to eether jine meetin or move out ov the kounty, Unkel Peeleg sez it wud not only take



kunsiderable ov a lode oph ov his mind, but it wud also be rite smart better fur his hosses. He sez he hired Jo be-kaws he cud git him a heapcheaper thun he cud a got sum uther hands, but he told the preecher all about him at the time, and he lowed it wudent be more thun a munth or so at the furdest before hede mannidge sum-

how or uther to git him into meetin, and lurn him that he cudent jerk the jaw oph ov a mule that didnt pull a plow to suit him, onless he wuzzent pertickler about wantin to git to hevvin; and if Jo cud only be broke ov a few sech things ez that, Unkel Peeleg lowed that he wud be wuth dubble the munny he had to pay him. But sum how or uther the preecher didnt peer to git a hold ov Jo as he ort to hav dun, and instid ov gittin better, he was if anything wurse, and wud jest as soon kick in a kows

ribs or brake a kaffs neck as ever, if they didnt behave theirselves to suit him. As long as he had to keep Jo, the old feller lowed he wud be firm sot in the idee that the preecher hadent ort to be pade mutch more thun house rent and vittles ontill he got up a revival.

Old Grandaddy Nucks was also another wun who cut down his quarteridge purty ny a third, as quick as he cud git to a steward after he heerd what the rest ov us leadin members was a doin. The old man also sed that he was in fur a revival as keen as cud be, and sed he bleeved he wud purty ny giv a dollar out ov his own pocket if we cud git wun a goin strong anuff to make them boys ov Briskums stop stonin his dog and behave theirselves. He sed they was a gittin so bad that his dog cudent hav a minnits peace any more when they was around, but that he had to stay under the house and howl a good sheer ov the time here lately. He sed he told Bruther Skybuster more thun six munths ago that he wanted him to see to it that them boys jined meetin and lurnt how to behave theirselves, but he hadent tended to it. The old man lowed that if we cud git a preecher who wud put a stop to all the devilment in town, without havin to pay him sech a turpibul site more thun we did Bruther Skybuster, that it wud pay us to do it.

Bruther Kalup Chiller was a little slow in gittin to the stewards to hav his quarteridge fetched down to where it wud be reesunable; but he finally got there, and had six dollars marked oph ov what he had ben a givin. He sed that if the preechers wages was to be cut down, he cudent see no sense

in his havin to pay full price any more thun the rest ov us, and he wudent do it. He sed it grouted him like evrything bekaws we didnt hav no revival; but he was still in hopes that there wud be sech a shakin up in meetin matters before long that he cud git along haff way decent with Gid Weezer, whose farm jines hizzen, and not hav to be in sech a stew ov aggervashun with him a good sheer ov the time. He sed that Gid was sech a kontrary feller that it sumtimes tuke evry grane ov religyun he cud muster to keep frum gittin into a rite out and out fite with him; and if Bruther Skybuster didnt soon buckel down to it in ded airnest, and git Gid to jine Church and pay him bak that barl ov salt he had borried more thun a yeer ago, he was afeerd that he wud soon hav to stop tryin to tawk in klass meetin. If it was a preechers bizness to do anything at all, outside ov marryin and buryin peepul, he cudent see why it wuzzent his bizness to git sech fellers as Gid to belong to meetin and behave theirselves. Bruther Chiller sed that if Bruther Skybuster wud garrentee to git up sech a rousin revival that fokes wud drive thru mud hub deep to kum to meetin, he wudent mind givin two dollars more in apple sass toards helpin him to do it; but onless this was dun, he wudent giv a cent more thun nine dollars in quarteridge fur this yeer, and he wud like to pay the most ov that in stove wood. He sez heze got a lot ov leavins that he wants to git shut ov.

Simun Putterbinks wife has ben a payin a dollar and two bits evry three munts heretofore, but when she found out what Bruther Chiller had dun,

she hunted up a steward in short meeter, and giv him to understand that seventy five cents was all she wud stand after this, and that, she lowed, was rite smart more thun the preecher had ben airnin in her family. She sed her hired gal broke jest as many dishes as she wud if there wuzzent a meetin house in the kounty, and the naburs stole jest as mutch wood frum her as they did before she jined meetin. Anuther thing was that altho her man, Simun, had jined the Church and alwas went to meetin, when he was at home, onless it kum on a lodge nite, he still growled as mutch about the cookin ez ever, and he was alwas reddy to whale a yungun at the drop ov a hat, if it dun anything to hektur him. She sed when Simun was away frum home, where he cud go to uther meetin houses, and cud hear uther men preech, he wud sumtimes git so happy that he wud have to buttin his kote kleeer up to the chin to keep frum shoutin, akordin to what he rit home in his letters; but he wuzzent never trubbled that way around home, and so she cudent see no yuse in payin a preecher full price who wud let he~ old man bakslide in site ov the meetin house.

Namun Bruly cut down his quarteridge bekaws he had a cow die; and Bruther Joshua Joobus lived where the rodes was bad, and as he cudent git to meetin only wunst in a while, he cudent see no reesun why he shud hav to pay full price. Still he was in fur a revival as strong as anybody, he sed, and if they got wun a goin raal brisk, he didnt kno but he wud attend sum ov the meetins, if the krick didnt git too hy, onless they kum at a time when his hosses needed rest or shoein.

Nate Forbus lowed he cudent pay near as mutch as hede ben a doin, bekaws the Royal Buckskin Thrashers had ben a gittin um uniforms, and it had kost him more fur that thun he had kounted on. Jo Spidel cudent pay as mutch as hede ben a doin, bekaws he hadent had near as good luck this yeer as he did last, and pervishuns was hyer. Tater Smith only pade haff what he did last yeer, bekaws so many ov his hogs had died before he cud git um into market; and the Widder Tanner wudent pay nuthin, bekaws they wudent let her sing in the quire. Jooly Ann Dooley yust to pay a dollar evry three munts, but this yeer she kunkluded she wudent pay but a quarter. She sed she had hed the tooth ake so mutch that she hadent more thun haff enjoyed religyun anyhow, and so she bleaved she wudent resk any more thun a dollar this yeer on preechin, the way things looked. She wud like to see a revival that wud make men kum to meetin. Marthy Persimmon sed she wud pay ez mutch as she did last yeer, but she wanted to pay it all in knittin mittens fur the preecher. She wanted to git her a dress that wud be good anuff to eether be married or berried in, and so she wanted to be keerful about throwin away munny. Leroy Pollyfox had a noshun to draw out altogether and jine the Prisbyterians, bekaws they had kushuns on their benches; but if they wud jest let him go with whatever he saw fit to put in the hat, and not pester him about quarteridge, he didnt kno but what hede put it oph a spell longer.

And so it went, ontill purty mutch evrybody belongin to the Ciderville meetin house had trimmed

down their quarteridge ontill the recordin stewards book lookt as tho it had ben shot at in a shootin match. About the only wuns that I kin call to mind that dident immejutly kick and call fur a cut down, as soon as they lurnt what the rest ov us was up to, was the Widder Good, and Sister Brass, and Isum Klover. But if youle bleeve me, Jess, instid ov aktin like people who hav the gumpshun to look out fur theirselves in munny matters, the whole ka-booodle ov um akshully went to the stewards, as soon ez they heerd how things was a goin, and instid ov follerin our egzample, and savin theirselves munny while they had a chance, what did they do but agree to pay more quarteridge, without no more kunsern about where the munny was to kum frum thun I wud look at a band waggin. Altho the Widder Good has to jest about skrub her fingers oph to make a livin, and was a givin ten dollars a yeer before, which she alwas mannidged sum how or uther to pay in kleeer munny, without ever havin to be dunned fur a cent ov it, she sed she bleeved she cud giv five dollars more, without havin to go without many things that she wud miss so very mutch; and so she told the stewards they cud jest set it down against her, bekaws, she sed, she knode she cudent git a wink ov sleep herself if she had any idee that the preechers fokes had gone to bed hungry, if she hadent dun all that she cud do to see that they was well pervided fur. If I had religyyn as reckless as sheze got it, I dont bleeve it wud be long before yude git a letter frum Squire Boxwood, tellin you that you had a bruther in the poor house.

I dont know jest how much more Sister Brass agreed to giv, but Jim Teester sez he heerd that she giv up goin on a visit to her sister in Ingunopolis to do it, and she haint seen her fur six yeers nuther, Jim sez; but then Isum Klover haint a whit behind her. You kno I told you how, even after they had sesst the blockhed twenty dollars, he was jest desperit anuff to give um twenty more, without even waitin to be asked to do it, which made it jest the same as if sum body was to break into his pantry evry three munts and karry oph a spring waggin, lode of pervishuns. But in spite ov all that, the fust time he kum to town after me and Bruther Gimps had sawed down our quarteridge, he went as strate to the passunidge as a feller who wanted to git married, and told Bruther Skybuster to hav his name writ down fur ten dollars more, and Lin Jessup, who was there a helpin the preechers wife to do a little sowin, sed that his voice dident even trimble.

Fifty dollars a year! My stars, Jess, haint that a heap ov munny to be waisted jest fur preechin? There haint hardly no figgerin up what a feller cudent do by takin that fifty dollars and buyin sum kavs or a few pigs, and takin good keer ov um, ontill they wud do to drive to market; and yit sum how or uther Isum dont peer to be gittin poor the way a body has a rite to expect that he ort to. Last yeer the hog kollery was dredful bad amungst us, and purty ny evry farmer in the township had to suffer frum it most skandlus, but not a solitary shote ov Isums was tetched by it. When it struck my hogs I dropt evry thing else and dident lose a

minnit in gittin um to market; but in spite ov that, seven ov the purtiest pigs I ever razed dide on my hands within a hundred yards ov the skales where the weighin was dun, and I had to let um go fur sope grease, when if thade a lived an hour longer Ide a got full price fur evry wun ov um. But while me and Bruther Wilkins, and Unkel Kalup, and Bruther Gimps, and several more ov us, who had helped to bild the Ciderville meetin house, was a loozin munny like a steambote a blowin up, without gittin a grane ov kumfort out ov our religyun, old Isum kep as kam as tho he didnt hav a pig that was in danger, and yit Jess he had as fine a bunch ov hogs as any man ever lade ize on—moren a hundred ov um, and evry last wun ov um bouncers. But the market was kleeer down, owin to evry body bein so skairt that they was a rushin evry hog that cud walk to market; but Isum didnt peer to be in no hurry about sellin.

Tom Grimes and me, and sum more ov us, went to him and told him that he hadent ort to lose an hour in sellin, and the best thing he cud do wud be to rush his hogs rite oph to market, as quick as he could git um there. But he only lafft, and sed there wuzzent no use in our worryin about him. He sed that the Lord knode where his hogs was, and if he didnt want him to have um, he didnt want um. We tried to show him that he was a standin in his own lite, and that bizness was wun thing and religyun was anuther, and that even then sum ov his hogs mite hav the kollery, and hede better git shut ov um before they begun a dyin; but the stubborn feller wudent budge frum the stand he had take,

and sed he wud ruther grub stumps fur a livin thun to sell a hog after he mistrusted it had the kollery. He sed that what he wudent eat hisself he wudent sell to nobody else to make pervishuns out ov.

At that we all got on our hosses and left him, expectin as mutch as cud be that evry last hog wud die on his hands, and serve him jest rite, too, we thawt; but instid ov that he never had any better luck in all his life with hogs thun he did with them. He kep um till they was jest rite, and sold um at the top ov the market, without the kollery tutchin wun ov um, while Bruther Kalup Chiller, who lives on the farm jinin him, lost evry last hog he had, and had to buy pork ov Isum to make gravy to karry his family thru the winter; and now, Jess, if that haint the bullhededst luck you ever heerd ov, in so fur ez Isum is kunserned, I wish yude tell me what you call it.

CHAPTER III.

EVERY-DAY LIFE IN CIDERVILLE.

A Brass Kettle Causes a Church Fuss.

I VE jest got home from the kourt house in Cider-ville, where Ive ben a settin on the jury until I feel ez mizrabul as tho Ide lost a wheat crop. Dekater Brunstetter sued Markis Beens fur sum dissatisfaktion he had with him in a hoss trade, and it was jest my luck to git slapt onto the jury, where Ive ben kooped up, without even a chance to whittle, till my tung feels like sand paper. I never did like that kind ov work, and Ide a heap sooner hav the ager any time, if it wuzzent that the wages is better. There wuzzent nuthin mutch about the trial that was interestin to me, except the speeches ov Leroy Pollyfox, our wunderful Ciderville lawyer, who kin rake a feller wuss with his tung thun sum fokes cud do with a pitchfork. The way he did giv it to old Beenzes lawyer,



who was a bolhedded feller frum Grassburg, was anuff to make dogs bark; and Beens hissself got a dose wunce in awhile that dubbled him up as tho he had the kollick. Leroy called the uther lawyer evrything that a decent man cud object to, and it looked to me as tho they kum purty ny gittin into a fite moren a duzzen times before the judge sent us to the jury room. They wud both show their teeth, and shake their fists, and carry on desperit, and I dont think I ever heerd peepul talk so plane to wun anuther in all my born days, outside ov man and wife, as them two lawyers did; but the mystery ov it is that outside ov the kourt room they never giv wun anuther a sassy word, and after the jury kum in, and the case was settled, they cudent a behaved any better toards wun anuther if they had both ben members ov the same meetin house. They walked oph, arm in arm, and in lessen ten minnits I saw um a smokin seegars together.

But talkin about fussin and meetin, puts me in mind ov sum ov the queer noshuns I yust to hav before I jined, and got where I thawt Ide hav to be a little pertickler about my behavin, at least when uther fokes was a watchin me. I had an idee then that Church members all jest about lived to lend wun anuther munny, and see how naburly they cud be; and if the truth must be knone, that was wun ov the main reasons that got me to jine; fur I thawt I cud git along a heap slicker, and make munny lots faster, if I cud only git evrything I wanted on credit, and didnt have to stop work evry whipstitch and go chasin around here and there a tryin to straten out things that sumbody had ben a sayin

about me; fur it had alwuz ben my luck to be misunderstood and talkt about most skandlus by meetin fokes, and I didnt like it. I thawt if belongin to meetin, and payin my quarteridge, and takin a few dride appuls to the passunidge now and then, wud stop sech things, and mebbe git the whole kaboodle ov um to braggin on me, it wud be wuth a good deal more thun it kost; and so on that akount, and sum uthers that Ile not stop to menshun jest now, I kunkluded to be tuck in on probashun, and try it fur six munts any how. But I want to tell you, Jess, that there never was a man any wurse fooled over sech things thun Ive ben. I expected to find the peepul all lamlike and peaceable, but outside ov meetin I cant say that sech has ben the kase.

But I was a goin to tell you about a fuss the Widder Tanner started over a brass kittle. You see it was a fuss that was begun about nine yeer ago, and its kep a gittin wuss and wuss evry yeer, ontill it has kum preshus neer bustin the Church, and theres no tellin where it ever will stop, if sum ov the ringleaders dont soon dy and giv the rest a chance to behave theirselves. It was the yeer we had so many peaches that we didnt hardly kno what to do with um, and as they wudent sell fur mutch, evrybody went to kannin to save what they cud ov um. That was before Tanner dide, and him and Namun Bruly was in pardnership in the carpenter bizness. Kurnel Soundin Brass was a bildin rite smart that yeer, and Jack and Namun was a workin fur him. They was both good fellers, and well meanin men, and you cudent make anybody bleeve they wud ever a had a grane ov trub-

ble, if it hadent a ben fur their wimmim fokes, speshly the Widder Tanner—that is, she bekum a widder not long afterwards; and to this day theres peepul that has their suspishuns that Tanner wud a lived longer if his wife had a ben a better Church member.

At that time brass kittles was skeerce amungst us, and the wun that Missus Tanner had was on the go jest about konstunt. It happened wun day that Missus Simbul wanted to borry the kittle. There dont peer to be mutch in that, I think I kin heer you say, but it was that very thing that has kum so ny bustin the Church. You see Bruther Simbul had only jest moved his family amungst us about that time, and frum the grand way he stepped around with his gold hedded kane, and his nose pinchin spex on, a wearin his Sunday kloze all the week, fokes thawt that the Simbulzes must be sumbody sure anuff; and so, as Missus Tanner alwuz wants to git in with quality peepul, and carry on as proud as tho her pap had kep a tavern, she was ankshus to obleege Missus Simbul, and so she told her she cud hav the kittle rite away, the very minit Karoline Manooover got thru with it. That mite a ben all rite if it hadent a ben that her promise was out to Namun Brulys wife that she shud hav it next. Nancy had her peeches all peeled, and was reddy to go to bilin ez soon as she cud git the kittle.

Well, the upshot ov it was that Namuns wife was dissipinted to obleege Missus Simbul, and as she is hy strung and has Kaintucky blud in her on her paps side, the minit she found it out she put on her sun bonnit without stoppin to kome her bangs,

and went rite over to Zimari Henpecks, and told his wife all about it. Of korse Sister Henpeck left her dinner dishes fur the flize to see to, and went at it as brisk as her roomatiz wud low her, to tell evry body she cud git to, that there had ben an awful fuss betwixt Nancy Bruly and Missus Tanner.

Jooly Ann Dooley found out all about it by heresay, and was good anuff to go and tell Missus Tanner what Namuns wife shud hav sed about her, and that made her so mad that she wudent cook Tanner no supper, and told him that if he didnt break the pardnership betwixt him and Bruly rite away she wudent live with him no longer.

The next Sunday Missus Bruly kum to meetin wearin a new hat with red feathers on it, and passed Tanners wife square in the path without wunst lookin at her. She carried her head as tho there was sumthin in the sky that she was a good deal take up with, and walked as if she had on new shuze with tacks in um, and she was in a hurry to git home and git on her old wuns. But the next Sunday Tanners wife kum a sailin into meetin after the Brulys had got there, flammed out in noo kloze as grand ez tho she had jest drawd a big prize in a lottery, and all thru the sarmint Nancy looked ez tho the judgment day cudent kum any too soon fur her. As the meetin was dispersin Missus Tanner got where Sister Bruly cudent git out without passin her, and then ez she kum up she reechd out with her new glove to shake hands with her, but Nancy tightened her mouth and throd up her hed, and sailed by her like a settin hen jest kummin away from the nest.

The next day, while Tanner and Bruly was at work shinglin the house where Leroy Pollyfox lives now, they kum to words about who should snap the chawlk line, and the next thing any body knode they was a throwin up wun anuthers wives to each uther most tremenjus, and frum that it wuzzent no time at all ontill they was a shakin their fists and a talkin ez tho they dident agree on pollyticks. One ov um throde the blame fur the whole thing on Bruther Tinklun Simbuls wife in a way that he was sorry fur in less thun an hour afterwards, fur Sim Kidwell he happened to hear him, and of korse Simbul wuzzent long in gittin perticklers that made him feel bad.

The pardnership was broke up rite away, and Tanner and his wife kum purty ny partin over it. Frum words that was dropt by wun ov the men, and carried to Kurnel Brass afterwards by Sam Pippis, he got his dander up against Bruther Simbul, and it was wun good long stretch before they wud mutch more than speak to wun anuther agin, and I dont kno ez they hav got intirely over it yit, fur whenever they happen to meet they are as distressin polite to wun anuther as tho they was both a tryin to git the same post offis. The wimmun went rite on talkin about wun anuther evry chance they got, and ov korse all their frens took sides, and in a little while things was in a turrible fix in the Ciderville meetin house. Squire Boxwood and me we sed we jest cudent see no sense in sech doins; but law bless you, Jess, what kin two men do toards stiddyin down a Church, when theres moren a duzzin wimmun a doin all they kin to tare it up agin? The

preecher we had then was Bruther Joner Givdown, and it wuzzent long ontill that pore man begun to look ez tho his hoss wuz sick and he had to walk his sirkut. He ruther tuke sides with Missus Tanner, and wanted Nancy to go to her and apologize; but she got so mad you cudent a told what kuller her ize was, and she soon giv him to understand that she wud see him blest fust.

Frum that time on, things has ben in a bad mess. If wun side was in favor ov anything, the uther was sure to be down on it; and its got so that Bruther Skybuster has to be most monsus keerful in his preechin, or heze sure to hurt sumbody's pheelins and luzе sum ov his wages. In wun ov his sarmints, a spell ago, he spoke ov a womun in the Bible who found fault with anuther wun, and immejutly evrybody looked at Nancy Bruly and the Widder Tanner, and they looked at wun anuther in a way like Ive seen things do at the sirkus when they was about to be fed raw meat, and the upshot ov it was that neether wun ov um has pade a cent ov quarteridge sense.

I spoze sech things has got to happen, Jess, but sumtimes I pheel as tho I wud almost be willin to giv ten bushels ov pertaters if I cud only be sure that I cud mannidge sum how or uther to git to heaven without havin to be mixed up with sech a fussy set as sum ov our Ciderville meetin fokes is. But as all the good men in the Bible had to eether be throde into the phire or the lions den, or slapt into jail or sum uther place where it was most desperit onpleasant, I spoze its to teach fokes like me and Squire Boxwood that weve got to hav it tur-

rible tuff here, or never hav a chance to walk up and down the shinin streets ov glory.

The Secret Society Funeral.

Ime turrible sorry to tell you that old Sam Blume is ded. Jest what he was wuth nobody knows exact, but its the gineral konseet that he left things in purty good shape. He was alwuz fore-



handed, and never lent nuthin without bein sure to see that he got it back agin. About the biggest mistake ov his life was in marryin the seckund time. Besides his own children, who are all grown, he leaves two boys and a gal he tuck out ov the poor house and razed fur the daze works he cud see in um. But he has gone, leavin quite a wide streak ov sadness behind him;

tho his funeral shuke up ruther more ov a stir thun anything weve hed around here fur a long spell, and peepul wont git thru talkin about it ontill sumthin else happens.

You see, a yeer or so ago, they started a lodge ov the Royal Buckskin Thrashers in Ciderville, and old Sam he up and jined um, tho I never heerd what it kost him. Ez soon ez the konsern got in runnin order, they was all ankshus to have sumbody die, soze they cud git a chance to tend the

funerel in a body and show theirselves off. It was jest at this pint that Sam dun the fust akommodatin caper he ever kut in his hul life, without bein pade fur it, by dyin, and givin um a chance to bring out the band and show fokes what the Forth ov Jooly in the middle ov August wud look like.

I dont think nuthin ever happened around here that shook up the kountry more kumplete thun Bruther Blumes funerel did. He dide on Tuzeday, but by packin him in ice, and rubbin his forred with dokter stuff now and then, old Davy Gloom, the Ciderville undertaker, mannidged to save him till Sunday; fur it wudent do to spile sech a grand chance fur the Buckskin Thrashers by havin the doins on a week day, when neerly evrybody wud hav to work and cudent go.

The funerel was sot fur ten oklok, in the Ciderville meetin house, and Bruther Skybuster was to preech it, the reglar meetin havin to git out ov the way to make room fur it. By nine oklok the peepul begun to pour in ez tho there was a goin to be a baptizin, and ez fur ez you cud see, up and down evry road, clouds ov dust was a risin ez they kum a flockin in. The meetin house is about a milde frum the Blume humsted. The idee was to hav all the Buckskin Thrashers gether at the Church, and then march over to git the korps. By ten oklok the bildin was packed and jammed full ov peepul, who went airly to git a good seat, and it was a see-ryus matter ez to how the mourners was to be got in. Boys also klum all the trees frum which a good site was to be had; and still the peepul poured in, until there wuzzent room to hitch a hoss anywhere.

I was over at the humsted, in a dark room, with the uther mourners, and I thawt in my soul them Royal Buckskin fellers never wud git thru gallupin up and down the road, and kum and load the korps into the hurse. We sent old Davy out moren a duzzin times that mornin, to find out what made the drag, and evry time hede kum a tiptowin back, and say they was a waitin fur a lodge frum this pint or that, which wud be along dreckly, and then they wud begin the marchin.

At last I heerd the smuthered tap ov the drum in slow meter, and razin the winder blind jest anuff to look out, I saw that the perseshun had kum; and Kurnel Brass, who was the Grand Hilo Bosser, on his prancin white hoss, with a rainbow sash around his brest, and his sorde drawd and pinte uppard, was a tryin to git um into a strate line in frunt ov the house. And then dreckly the pall bearers kum, and carried out the koffun and put it in the hurse; and then, puttin the brass band in frunt, we sot forrad to slow muzik toards the meetin house, and when we got there sech a time as we had a gittin the korps and the mourners into the bildin you never saw. I dont think Kurnel Brass and Bruther Simbul ever had their hands quite so full fur a little spell ez they had then.

But after a bit we sumhow got in, things was quieted down, and the singin was begun, the peepul a standin up around the walls and in the iles and wherever there was room to stand, and a leanin thru the winders frum the outside. Evrybody was a swettin, and the wimmin fokes a fannin like all possest, fur the day was monsus hot.

While things was a bein got reddy to begin, I cudent help but notice the koffun, fur it was extravagance itself. It was about as big agin as it needed to be, and was burnished out in silver trimmins too turrible fur anything. If the korps had a ben sheriff ov the kounty they cudent a put any more nonsense on that koffun thun they had dun. Wherever there was room to waste a dollar it had ben dun. I dont bleeve old Sam ever fooled away more munny in all his life fur anything outside ov terbacker thun them fokes had squndered on the box they berried him in. It seemed a burnin shame; but I haint lernt yit who hez to foot the bill—the widder, or the Buckskin Thrashers. I kno it didnt cost lessen anuff to fatten a bunch ov hogs jest to put that slumberin man in the graveyard. No wunder sum fokes is afeerd to die.

Evrybody knoze that Bruther Skybuster is a master hand at sayin good things about a feller after heze ded and dont kno anything about it, but all ov us had to own up that he fairly outdun hisself that day. Old Sam cudent a helped bein tickled most to deth if hede a ben a lissenin to evry word ov the sarmint hisself. It made him out a dredful site nicer man thun Ide ever suspishuned him to be. Fur more thun an hour the preecher told us good things about the ded man that nobody else had ever notist, and made hisself hoarse a doin it. The Royal Buckskin fellers changed fust to wun leg and then the uther, and the boys in the trees got dredful tired; but still the sarmint went on and went on. Peepul may say what they will about Bruther Skybuster, but theres wun thing

about him they kin alwuz depend on certin, and that is good measure in his preechin. He never skimps in the pull pit.

But finally the preechin was all dun, and then Kurnel Brass he got his perseshun in moshun agin, and we tuke the remainins to the graveyard, and put um in the grave which Jo Teeters had dug fur um. The Buckskin Thrashers then tuke charge ov things, and had sum doins that nobody, except them ez had rid the gote theirselves, cud intirely understand. Then they throde sum cedar sprigs in the grave, and sot out fur town with the flags a flyin, the hosses a prancin, Kurnel Brass a shoutin, and the band a playin, ez tho evrybody in the kounty was glad that Sam was raaly ded and his funerel was over with.

When I got home that nite I felt ez tired ez if I had ben airnin two dollars at hard work; but the next day, after Ide got rested, I cud purty ny say with the Buckskin fellers that Ide had a splendid time. I bleeve I shall hav to jine um myself. Its about ez good a way to git fokes out to your funerel, who dont keer a pasnup fur you, as I kno ov.

Preparing for Company at the Farm-house.

I haint seen sech a klutter around our house sense the time the ginger kullerd kolt sawed hissself into sassidge meat on the barbed wire fence, as there was the mornin that Semanthy was a lookin fur them town fokes to kum out and spend the day with us. She wudent hear to nuthin else but

what I must let evrything go to skuthers fur the time bein, and shave up, and greeze my shuze, and put on a kleen shirt, and a fresh iruned pare ov blue pants, starched so stiff that I cudent klime a fence, and then set around durin the day, and help her and the gals to entertain the kumpny.

I dont kno but what we got up airlier thun yoo-shul that mornin, bekaws Semanthy didnt kno how tuff the rooster wud turn out to be, and she didnt want to run no resks with him. After hollerin the boys out to feed and kurry the hosses, and startin the gals out to do the milkin, I sot the fire a goin; and then, as soon as it was lite anuff fur me to see the bean poles, I went out and hode in the garden till brekfust was reddy. I dont kno what



Ide do if I cudent hav a garden to tend. It not only keeps me frum ever havin to waste a minnit myself, but it also helps me to see to it that the hired hand airns his wages. Sumtimes he gits thru with his uther work and kums to the house quite a bit before meals is reddy, and if it wuzzent fur that garden he wud git to set in the shade and fan hisself at my expense; but with the garden so handy, I kin tell him to take the hoe and go into the tater patch, and stay there till the horn bloze.

After brekfust I sot the boys to hawlin rales to

make a place to stack wheat on; and then I tuke a basket and got on a hoss and rid over to Jo Hedges, to borry their noo knives and forks and sum tee spunes and their galvunized shuger bowl and butter dish, fur when Semanthy has kumpny she likes to hav things look middlin slick, now I tell you.

On the way back I seen that old Bud Simpsuns hogs had got into the korn agin, and I had to go at it and dog um out; and jest as I got thru chunkin up the hole where they got thru at, along kum Rube Jinkins, and me and him sot there on the fence, and whittled and talked and talked and whittled, ontill I furgot all about the kumpny a kummin, and never wunst thawt ov it, till Matildy Ann kum to the top ov the hill and hollered till her hair kum down, that her muther wanted me at the house. When I got there I found the kitchin bilin hot, and smellin like a bakery. The old woman sed if I didnt want the fokes to kum and ketch me lookin like a heathen, Ide better be a stirrin toards gittin reddy, and so I had to go rite at it in short meter.

I wunder why it is, Jess, that when youre the most in a hurry your razer is sure to be the dullest. It was that way with me that mornin, and I haint hardly got thru sheddin tears about it yit. When I kum to my upper lip I felt as bad as if Ide lost a good hoss before I got thru with it. But I got thru at last, and as I sot there on the porch, with my Sunday kloze on, a fyтин the flize and a fannin myself with a nuzepaper, I felt most ez mizrabable as I did the day I was a goin to git married.

How the Preacher Gets his Quarterage.

I hav jest got back frum takin a lode ov wood up to the passunidge, and fur fear that yule think I giv it to the preecher, Ile hurry on to say that it is to go toards my quarteridge. You see I lernt a few pints by goin to the last Quarterly Konpherence that I bleeve is a goin to save me frum havin to pay out so skandalus mutch reddy munny fur preechin hereafter. I yust to think that the preechers wages had to all be pade in kash, and Ive sold many a good shote in my time, at jest a middlin fare market price, in order to git sum munny to send to quarterly meetin, when, if I had only ben up to snuff as keen as Bruther Sollymun Gimps and sum more ov um is, I cud have tuke the pig itself to the passunidge, and charged the preecher dubble price fur it. But then, as Semanthy sez, about sum things I never did hav mutch more thun ordinary settin hen gumpshun no how; and Ive lost lots ov munny by not keepin my ize open.



Why, Jess, do you kno that, altho Ive ben a belongin to meetin purty ny forty yeers now, it never got into my hed ontill here lately that any Church member in good standin had as mutch rite to take

anything to the preecher that he cudent giv away, and charge him two or three prices fur it, as a womun has to go to the store and git things charged to her husbun. It makes me feel as tho I had burs down my nek whenever I think ov how dum Ive ben about these things. In phact, it most makes me shiver whenever I think ov the munny I mite a saved if Ide a got my ize open a little sooner; fur I dont spoze theres ben a yeer sense I jined meetin when I haint had apples and kabbidge and pertaturs anuff rot on my hands to more thun pay the preecher, if Ide only had the foresite to git um to the passunidge before they was too fur gone to handle; to say nuthin ov the pickel pork Ive had that I cudent sell bekaws the brine hadent ben made quite strong anuff, or the hams that weeve ben onable to sell bekaws Izziker had salted um ruther too mutch to taste good.

Bruther Kalup Chiller hissself told me that he had never allowed anything to intirely spile on his hands sense there had ben a meetin house within ten miles ov him. He sez his way ov doin has ben to never run in dett fur his preechin sense he found out that preechers was obleeged to take whatever he tuke um, and low him his own price fur it. In phact, he sez that wun thing has dun as mutch to help him to be religyus as anything that was ever found outside ov a sarmin on baptism.

When he yust to hav to be pestered to deth with sum ov the stewards a runnin after him evry whipstitch fur munny, he sez it was an awful tryin thing fur him to belong to meetin; and if it hadent a ben that he was afeerd that mebbe the judgment

day mite kum before he was quite reddy fur it, there haint no tellin but what he wud hav put oph bein religyus ontill hede ben raal bad sick a time or so anyhow. Sense heze found out how easy it kums to support the gospel by payin the preecher in truck and dicker, heze alwas as kam as kold pye in the winter time, and never gits onsettled in meetin onless its when theres to be sum kind ov a kullekshun tuke up that specky vegetables, and uther things that dont kost mutch, kant go into. With a look on him as pleasant as tho hede jest ben a tradin hosses with a peddler and had got the best ov it, as he most ginerally duz, fur that matter, Bruther Chiller told me how that a short spell bak he grabbed a ham frum his old womun that she was about to throw into the sope greece, and the next day he tuke it up to Bruther Skybuster, and charged him two dollars fur it. He sed the preechers wife turned up her noze as he went in with it, and peered to be ruther jubous about takin it, and sed they didnt keer so very mutch about salt meat in summer time nohow; but the preecher happened to kum home jest then, and sed he reckoned mebbe thade better take it, fur I spoze he thawt more thun like it wud be that or nuthin. I happened to be up town myself, a gittin Matildy Anns shuze haff soled, the day that Bruther Chiller tuke that ham to the preechers house; and jest as I drove by the passunidge, I notist Bruther Skybuster out in his garden a berryin sumthin, but I didnt kno till afterwards jest what it was.

The fust time or so that I tuke wurmy dride appuls to the preecher, or eggs that had ben sot on

ontil the hen bekum diskurridged or got into a pot pi, I felt a good deal as tho I had jest broke into a smoke house and stole sumthin; but when I found out how monsus easy it was to git the stewards to allow me all I asked fur it, and that the preecher hisself tuke it all as a matter ov korse, and didnt raze no row about it, I felt sorry to think I had ben a feedin my pigs as long as I had dun with stuff that mite a ben tuke to the passunidge and turned into munny For when you kum to look at it rite, Jess, the tuffer times preechers has in this wurd the better it will be fur um in the next, and so the less I do fur um here the more Ime a doin fur um in the hereafter, dont you see, and that kind ov doin good never gives me the hed ake. If a man is ded sure that heze a goin to walk on gold side walks after awhile, and never be hungry agin fur a thousand yeers, why shud he wurry about a few spilt hams more or less in this wurd? It haint as tho he was a workin hard and airnin his livin like uther fokes; and evrything he gits is jest that mutch kleeer gain any how, as I told Squire Boxwood yisterday. Preechers hav sech an easy time ov it, in so fur as work goze, and git to go round drest up all the while, that it haint no more thun rite that us hard workin peepul shud hav a chance to pay um oph in stuff that we cudent do mutch with at a market house.

I had to go to town any how, to bring home an irun kittle fur makin sope in, that Semanthy had got from Missus Pooters fur fifteen balls of karpet rags and sum sox shede footed fur her old man, and so I thawt I mite as well take up a lode ov wood

and be airnin sumthin to pay the toll with. I filled the waggin bed up with sum krooked green elm lims that Izziker and the hired hand had ben a kuttin, and put some strate sticks on top to keep um frum jumpin out ov the waggin, as well as to help git a kustumer to sell the lode to. When I got to town I sot on the kourt house fence and whittled ontill long after dinner time, but nobody peered to be very ankshus to want to buy my wood. There was men who needed wood, and I had the only lode in town that day, but nearly evry body that kum to look had bought wood ov me before, and they didnt peer to keer about ever doin it agin. Ruther thun hav to stay in town all day, I offered to let wun feller hav the lode fur two dollars, and trust him two munts fur the munny; but he sed his forchun was yit to make, and he cudent afford to buy at sech prices. Kurnel Brass kum along, and I tride to skeer up a trade with him. I told him he mite hav the wood fur a dollar and six bits, and I wud take it all out in groceries. He looked at the wood and laffed ontill I thawt in my sole he wud swaller his chin whiskers, and sed he wished to goodness Bill Mix lived in town yit; he wud buy it and send it to him, coz Bill was the only man he cud think ov in the State that he had a grudge aginst.

I think mebbe I cud hav sold the wood to Bruther Tinklun Simbul, but he was most afraid the sticks was so krooked that his wife wud nearly kill herself in tryin to saw and split um. Majur Stinger, the editor ov the Ciderville Skorpion, kum along with a pencil sharpened at both ends over his rite ear, a going down to the meetin house to report

the doins ov the sowin society, and I told him I bleeved Ide let him hav the wood on subscripchon to his paper. He sed it wud tickel him most to deth to take it, but the phact ov the matter was that he didnt burn wood any more. His printices had got so big feelin they wudent saw it, and so he had to put in a kole stove. Jest as I was on the pint ov thinkin that about the best thing I cud do wud be to drive down to the bank and throw it into the river, and git my kittle and start, if I wanted to git home by supper time, Unkel Peeleg Wilkins kum along, on his way up to the drug store to git him a bottle ov a new kind ov liniment fur his chist, which he had seen advertised. When he lernt that I had ben there all day a tryin to sell that wood, he asked me why I didnt take it down to the preecher, and in ten minits afterwards I was onloadin it in Bruther Skybusters wood house. The preecher was away frum home, and so all I had to do was to drive up and throw it in, without havin to waste any time in tawkin about it. At the next Quarterly Konpherence Ile bring in that lode ov wood and charge three dollars fur it. The wood itself was wuth two dollars, and my time in gittin it there was certunly wuth anuther wun. Its a little singler to me that I sot there all day on that kourt house fence without wunst thinkin ov Bruther Skybuster.

The Donation Party.

I dont kno jest who it was that got up the doins, but I more thun haff mistrust that it was the Widder Tanner, bekoz sheze ginerally at the hed ov

purty mutch evry thing that takes place outside ov prayer meetin in our meetin house. The program was that the preecher and his wife shud sum how or uther be kungered into goin over to the uther side ov town to Namun Brulys, on Tuzeday evenin, to see their sick gal, and that Missus Bruly was to be sure to keep um there ontill after dark, if she had to hav a kunnipshun fit to do it.

Well, when the time kum around you never seen any-thing work nicer outside ov a harvest feeld thun that plan ov the Widder Tan-ners did. When Bruther Skybuster and his wife got home they found the lites lit all over the house, and moren a duzzen



wimmin out in the kitchen a bilin kawphy and a tawkin ez tho evry bonnet shop in town was on fire.

Evry room in the passunidge was so full ov kumpny that the cheers was in the rode, and yit they kep on a kummin ez brisk as the meazles a breakin out. Semanthy and me and the gals and Izzicker and Hyrum didnt git there ontill quite a spell after the preecher and his wife had got home; but them that was there sed neether him nur her

cud a ben any more bestruck with wunderment if Bruther Kalup Chiller had a tuck a noshun into his hed to dubble his quarteridge and pay evry cent ov it in kold munny without askin. They say that Bruther Skybuster never sed a thing fur ez mutch as a minit, but jest stood in the door and whisseled like I do when Ive lost sumthin and dont kno where to find it.

Zeb Koorods wife told Semanthy that she never in all her born days ever saw anything like the way Sister Skybuster looked when she opened the door and walked into the settin room, and found all them wimmin there a flyin around and turnin things upside down in her pantry. She sed that at fust evry drop ov blud left her face, and she thought in her sole the womun was a goin to drop rite square into the center ov the table, which was filled chuck full ov borried dishes and vittles that wud hav ben dredful mussy; but the next minnit or so afterwards she was ez kam as kold mush, and sot down to watch the wimmin a turnin her house upside down as onkunserned as tho hard times was moren a hundred miles oph.

The program was that evry body shud take sum kind of a present. Besides the pize and donuts which her and the gals fixed up, Semanthy took a little batch ov flour she had which wudent raze good, and sum cherries that she was afeerd wud sower. Matildy Ann tuke a duzzen kloze pins and Harriet Emily fetched a bar ov sope that had a leetle too mutch glue in it. Hyrum tuke a sack ov salt, and Izzicker tuke a pair ov bran new galluses fur Bruther Skybuster that hede bought with his

own munny. I thawt as the rest ov um had tuke so mutch it wudent be wuth while fur me to take anything, and so I dident.

They had a table in the frunt room that evry body was to put their presents on. I happened to hav the good luck to git a cheer where I cud see the fokes as they kum in, and it dun me good to watch um. Wun ov the fust to git there after I sot down was Unkel Peeleg Wilkins. He brought sumthin in a tin bucket with a kiver on it, which he told me with a sigh, as tho the mizry in his chist was purty ny a killin him agin, was a whole pigs hed. He sed his boys had butchered a shote the day before, and as his fokes dident keer mutch about jowl when they had plenty ov uther fresh meat, he had kunkluded that he cudent do no better thun to bring the hogs hed to the donashun.

Bruther Sollymun Gimps brought a punkin and a few dried apples tied up in a kottun hankerchief. Isum Klovers wife brought the preecher a new silk muffler to wear around his throte in kold weather, and a pair of mittens that shede knit him; and if youle bleeve me, Jess, Isum hisself akshully giv Sister Skybuster five dollars in munny, that he sed she was to do as she pleased with. Ime turrible afeerd that havin so mutch munny will make the preechers wife a good deal more independent than sheze ever ben. Bruther Kalup Chiller hisself dident bring nuthin, bekaws he sed his wife hed fetched sumthin fur both ov um. I dident git to see what it was she brung, but Harriet Emily sez she brought sum starch and a tin biskit kutter.

Kurnel Soundin Brass bawt a new hat fur the

preecher that wuzzent more thun six yeers or so out ov the fashion, and only a kuppel ov sizes too small fur him, and his wife brung a new shawl fur Sister Skybuster. Jooly Ann Dooly and Marthy Persimmon and Sister Peggy Damper, each wun ov um, brought sum starch; and Namun Brulys wife fetched a bottel ov pickled unyuns that Namun wudent eat bekaws she got too mutch mustard in um. Horrus Nibbs fetched a box ov blackin and sum matches, and Milly Dumps brought a pin kushin that sum ov the wimmin foax nearly went crazy over. Nate Forbus brung an irun dish rag, with sum ov the links broke; and his wife fetched a pair ov ingun rubbers that dident match, and wudent fit nobody. The Widder Tanner brawt a pam leaf phan and a bottel ov hoss medasun, and Lem Hackelberrys wife and the gals brawt a paper ov bird seed and a phew quilt pieces.

Kaptun Pusher was so bizzy that he cudent kum, but he sent a kaliko dress pattern and the thred to make it up with. Fur a feller that haint yit jined meetin that haint so bad. Sister Gadder brawt a pound ov crackers, and a peece ov sassafras to make tee out ov. Grandaddy Nucks brawt a quart ov applesass, and a new mop handle that his sun had made on his turnin lathe; but Ile not try to go into perticklers about evrybody, or Ile use my paper all up and not say mutch. But most evrybody brung sumthin, and the presents ranged all the way frum fish hooks to mustard plasters; but it did beat all how many fokes fetched corn-meal and salt and starch and popkorn, and uther stuff that wud make a kunsiderable show without

no end to it almost; and as fur dride appuls, I dont bleeve the preechers fokes will run out ov sass ov that kind while they stay on the sirkut. There was also a monsus thick sprinklin ov sorgum mulassiz, in bottles frum the size ov a hens egg up to a gallon jug with a kornkob stopper in it.

There wuzzent but one sack ov flour brawt, and by goin to a good deal ov trubble I learnt that it was sent frum Kurnel Brasses grocery, but that it had ben paid fur by the Widder Good, who takes in washin to make a livin.

There was bushels ov stuff there that wuzzent wuth carryin to the pig pen, but there was monsus little that cud be used to make the children keep still if they was cryin hungry. But then I reckon that it was all fur the best that it shud be that way, fur Ive alwuz heerd that it was mity easy to spile a preecher by bein too good to him; and its a turribul sollum thing to hav a paster git so proud and stuck up that he wont take nuthin but good sound korn and munny fur his quarteridge. I dont kno jest where to find the verse in the Bible that sez peepul that belong to Church ort to do all they kin to make their preechers ez meek as Moses and keep um so, but Ime purty sure its there sum-where; and if it is, theres that mutch Skripcher that us Ciderville peepul has lived up to ruther klose anyhow.

While me and Squire Boxwood and Majur Kyan Stinger, the editur ov the Ciderville Skorpion, and Bruther Kalup Chiller, and a few uther leadin men, was a settin in wun korner ov the room where the preecher duz his thinkin, a tawkin about what wede

do to make times easier if we was President and had the say so, the word was giv that supper was reddey, and then sech a skramblin around ez immejutely follered I dont think Ive ever seen outside ov a sheep paster at saltin time. Frum the way a good many ov um carried on youde a thawt they was most desperit hungry and was afeard they wudent git nuthin. But sum how or uther, I dont kno jest how, they was all finally fed; but I tell you, Jess, there wuzzent many baskets full ov fragments left to be gethered up. Semanthy and both ov the gals say that they looked into the pantry and the kubbard, after the fokes had begun to disburse, and they cudent see the sine ov anything left to git brekfust with, except the Widder Goods sack ov flour and the hog hed that Unkel Peeleg fetched. Evvrything else had either ben et up or carried oph as kleen ez a kob. There wuzzent nuthin but chicken bones and dirty dishes in sight nowhere; and it peered that not only had evvy blessed thing that the donashuners had brung with um ben made way with, but evvy krum that the Skybusters had on the primises before the frakus begun had also ben gobbled up as slick as a door nob, inkludin a bushel ov appuls the boys found in the wood house, and about four duzzin oranges that had ben giv to Bruther Skybuster that day fur marryin a feller down at Shakeville.

It was also a turribul tryin time on the preechers furniture, and a good many ov the things wont hardly be wuth movin agin. A big lookin glass, that was a hangin up in the frunt room over the mantel shelf, got nocked down sum how or uther,

and was smashed into more thun fifty peeces. They say that when the preechers wife fust heerd about it she looked ez tho pizen wud taste good to her; but when, jest afterwards, sumbody kum a runnin to tell her that Zebidy Forbus and anuther boy had got to skufflin and broke a chiny pitcher that Sister Brass had giv to her, the teers kum into her ize, and she had to cry in spite ov herself.

Sumbody got hold ov the hankerchuff full ov dride appuls that Bruther Gimp's had brawt, and strung um all over the floor, frum wun end ov the house to the uther, and Semanthy sez it was a site the way they was tromped into the karpud. Sum ov the yungsters also got to actin the fool by tryin on the plug hat that Kurnel Brass fetched the preecher, and Jim Teesters boy mannidged sum how or uther to run his thum thru the top ov it. Nobody knoze how wun ov the bottles ov sorgum mulassiz kum to git broke and run all over the uther presents, nur who it was that went out to his barn and stole Bruther Skybusters munky wrench and buggy whip.

There was heaps ov uther mischuff dun that I haint got ink anuff left in the bottle to tell you about; but to us fokes that jest went there to in-kurridge the preecher and git a good supper, I tell you, Jess, we had, a fine time, and didnt mutch be-grudge the things we tuke with us. Semanthy brawt home purty ny a whole kake that had white sugar frostin on it, which she sez the Widder Tanner told her to help herself to. Matildy Ann got three or four oranges that she got by changin places as they was a bein passed around, and Har-

riet Emly brawt away a bottle ov pickles that hadent ben opened yit. She dont kno jest how she kum by it, as sumbody handed the bottle to her while she was a tawkin with a widderer, and she dident notis that she had it ontill shede got started home with it.

Sum ov the presents that had ben brung turned up missin, so the preecher told me afterwards, inkludin the silk muffler and the mittens; but nun ov the packidges ov kornmeal and starch and salt, and so on, was karried oph that he knoze ov Bruther Skybuster, they say, is a feelin dredful blue on akount ov all the bad luck that kum to him so unexpected in the donashun; and he sez that with the shortidge in his last yeers quarteridge, and winter a kummin on so alarmin klose, heze afeerd that times is a goin to be dredful hard with him mity shortly. He peers to be rite smart meeker thun Ive ever knode him; but they say his wife declares sheze a goin to take the five dollars that Isum Klover giv her, and buy a shotgun that kin shute buck shot, and shele see if anybody will dare to kum around that passunidge with any more donashuns while she stays there.

CHAPTER IV

INSIDE OF THE MEETING-HOUSE.

Isum Klover's Sunday-School.

LAST Sunday afternoon I had the boys hitch the hosses to the spring waggin, and Semanthy and me rid over to the Sunflower Deestricht skule house, where Isum has his meetin. As soon ez we got in site I seen that there was a big turnout, fur there was a kun-siderable few buggies and waggins hitched to the fence all around the skule house. As we went into the door Isum met us, and shuk hands, and sed he was raal glad to see us, and then he pinted out sum seats for us to set in. I skinned one ov my knee kaps in gittin my legs squeezed in under a nine yeer old boys ritin desk, and it made me feel moren seventy five yeers old to set so kramped up until the meetin was out; but Isum had promised that he wudent kall on me to pray, and so I felt rite smart more kumfortable thun I hav dun at



uther times and in uther places where I had rite smart more nee room.

I dont mind ez I hav ever ben to a Sunday skule any where sence I was a boy till last Sunday, and I was jest about amazed to see how chipper the little fokes looked. To smile or look plezzent at Sunday skule when I was a boy wud hav ben to run a turrible strong resk ov bein struck by litenin durin the next thunder storm; but them little tads in Isums skule was all a lookin ez glad as tho they had sweet kake in their pockets. It does beat all, Jess, how things duz change ez we git older. If any body had ever told me when I was a little codger that I wud live to see children look happy in meetin I wudent a bleeved it.

And then there was anuther thing about it that made me skratch my hed, and that was this: You see it was a luvly day. The wether cudent a ben any nicer if Ide a hed the makin ov it myself, and I knode that the fish wud jest about jump out ov the water to bite, and yit I dont bleeve there was a boy without a broken leg who lived within a mild ov that skule house who wuzzent there, and a lookin tickled most to deth bekawz he had kum, and it was the same with the gals and also the yung fokes; but the most amazin part ov the whole thing was to see bolhedded peepul there, and fokes with spex on—fokes thats married and settled down and has things at home to see to. It looked as tho Isum had sum how or uther gone thru that naberhood like mumps in a big family, and got holt ov evry body. How he got um I dont kno; but he had um, and he mannidged sum how or uther to make the

time pass so interestin that when I kum to look at my watch as I was onhitchin the hosses to start fur home, I thawt sum ov the wheels must a slipt, fur I jest cudent make myself bleeve that Ide ben dubbled up there like a chicken in the shell for a sollid hour and a haff without hardly knowin it, except fur the kramps in my neeze that mite hav eazy ben mistook fur roomatiz. If Bruther Sky-buster had a ben there a preechin I kno I shud hav felt as tho I had ten thousand bones in me.

In the perseedins there was a good deal ov singin; and it was singin that was singin too, bekawz it was done by little codgers who didnt kno any better thun to jest open their mouths wide and let their hul harts kum rite out in the moozick. They had a little orgun there, which I lurnt afterwards that Isum hissself had sold a fat steer to buy, and his gal dun the playin on it, and akordin to my thinkin her playin was way ahed ov that ov Milly Dumpzes, the yung woman who plays the orgun in the Ciderville meetin house. They say the gal is nearly ez full ov queer noshuns about what it means to belong to meetin as her daddy is. I wish to goodness thade git a lot ov children to do the singin up at Ciderville, instid ov the set thave got a fussin with wun anuther there now. Sum-times its anuff to make you pheel ez tho you had taxes to pay at the way they carry on up there, and thats wun ov the things that makes Bruther Sky-buster look ez old as he duz.

You wudent bleeve how natcheral it did kum to Isum to pray and talk to the peepul he had gethered there that day. He peers to be a different man

altogether down there in that little skule house amungst his naburs frum what he is up in the Ciderville meetin house, where so many ov um has alwuz giv him the kold shoulder. Down there it peers ez tho all he has to do is to open his mouth and sumthin is sure to kum out ov it that means sumthin. When I try to talk in meetin my throate gits dry and my tung wont work, but law bless you, it haint that way with Isum.

After thade sung a bit Isum he red a peese frum the Bible which was to be the lesson that day, he sed, and then he purseeded to talk to us about it, and explain matters. It peered that there was a dredful good king, by the name ov David, who had a boy by the name ov Abslum, who was jest too kontrary mean fur anything, and ez proud as a woman with a kleeer kumpleckshun. He had long hair that he yoost to let hang loose over his shoulders, and he wud strut around thru Jeroosalem, the town where his father lived, as proud ez a turky gobbler. As soon as Isum told about that, I hadent any more use fur Abslum, bekawz I had a hired man jest like him wunst, and he wuzzent wuth a pewter buttin fur nuthin. He yoost to greeze his hair, and put perfumery on it, and on Sunday mornins hede dress up and look ez spruce ez a barber pole, and then away hede go a galavantin all around the country with the gals, a leavin me all the chores to do, and that wud be the last ov him till midnite.

Well, frum what Isum sed, it peered that was jest egzackly the kind ov a feller Abslum was. He wudent never turn his hand or do a lick to help his father do nuthin, but he wud jest loaf around the

gate ov the town all the time with his Sunday klose on, while David was a tendin to the kountry; and then whenever a farmer who had ben sued wud kum in with a load ov wood or tanbark or sumthin to sell to pay the kosts with, what duz Abslum do but buttinhole him and go to talkin pollyticks and runnin down his own pap? By sech doins as that he dun his level best fur a good while to pizen foax against his father David, who, in fakt, had jest about built up the whole kountry, the same as Washinton did Ameriky. Things run on in this way, till after awhile Abslum made a bold strike and got sum solgers, and druv his poor old father out into the kountry, tho David didnt want to fite with the yung feller, and went out willinly.

But David had a gineral by the name ov Joab, who didnt bleeve in lettin the king giv up evrything fur Abslum, and so he brawt out his trupes, and they had a turrible battle. While the fite was a goin on, Abslum, who had ben fule anuff to go to war without fust goin to a barber shop, rid under a bushy tree on his mule, and them fine locks ov hizzen got ketched in the lims, and ez the mule trotted on he was left a hangin there till Joab kum up and made short work ov him by shootin a ramrod thru him.

But when David kum to find out that the boy was ded it most broke his hart, so Isum sed; fur in spite ov all his meanness his father sot a heap ov store by him, and wud hav ben only too glad to let him set along side ov him on the throne, or a giv it all to him fur that matter, if hede only a ben man anuff to ask fur it.

I got so interested in what Isum was a sayin, that when a yung womun kum a passin the hat around, I dropt a half a dollar into it without no-tissin what I was a doin until she had got kleeer away with it.

Ive got the biggest kind ov a noshun to go back there agin next Sunday, fur Ide like to hear Isum talk sum more about King David, and git all the perticklers about Abslums funeral, and what kind ov a tume stone they put up fur him. But if I do I bleve Ile take a milkin stool along to set on, and leave the most ov my munny at home behind me.

The Phrenology Lectures.

It begins to look as tho Bruther Skybuster wudent never git a pertraktet meetin started at Ciderville, notwithstandin weere nearly all in fur a revival as keen ez kin be. Me and Squire Boxwood and Unkel Peeleg Wilkins and Bruther Sollymun Gimps and Bruther Kalup Chiller, and sum more ov the leadin members, has ben a dingdongin at him, ever sense we got our korn gethered, to kno why in the name of fishhukes he didnt go at it and hav his meetins and git um over with, so that we wudent hav to be a dredin their kummin all the time; but it peered as tho he wuzzent never reddy to go at it when we told him to; or if he was, sumthin was ded sure to happen that wud upset evrything, and make it look as tho the Lord wuzzent in favor ov his holdin meetins yit awhile.

Most a munth ago the moon was jest about rite, and the rodes ez near good as they ever git to be

with us in the winter time; but when the preecher sed on Sunday that he had kunkluded to begin meetins the kummin week, Kurnel Soundin Brass had to git up fur the trusteeaze, and say that they had rented out the meetin house to a feller who was a goin to giv sum kind ov a hed feelin show in it evry nite fur a kupple ov weeks or so, exceptin Sundays. He was a man who had wunderful gifts, and knode so mutch that he cud blindfold hisself, and jest by layin his hand on a bodys hed, he cud tell how mutch sense they had; and a heap ov uther things, so wun ov his handbills sed, which was passt up fur the preecher to read. The nooze ov this tickled most evrybody like evrything; koz we wud not only be a makin sumthin toards payin the meetin house ixpenses by lettin the old feller hav his doins in it, but it wud be so dredful nice fur us to have sum place to go that wud be most as good as a show, and yit not hav to pay nuthin to git in, nur be pestered with a kullekshun after we got there.



Ov korse Isum Klover and the Widder Good and Sister Brass, and five or six uther wuns, was against it ez stubborn as cud be, and wud a good deal ruther hav had the meetins break rite out, and go it like a house on fire fur six weeks or more, no

matter how bizzy us farmers was; but as the trustee had made their bargain with the old codger to hav the meetin house fur his purseedins as long ez he wanted it, there wuzzent no gittin around it, and so they had to put up with it; but old Isum peered to be dredfully cut up about it, and cudent hardly git it into his hed that we was raaly a goin to hav a two weeks doins in the church where there wuzzent a goin to be any prayin or singin dun. He sed it was a skandlus shame that we cudent hav the yuse ov our own meetin house when we wanted it fur our paster to hold meetins in. I spoze mebbe Bruther Skybuster cud hav upsot the whole bizness, and had the meetins go on anyway; but heze as feerd ov Kurnel Brass as I am ov kounterfit munny, and when the Kurnel sets down his foot, and sez that a thing is to be, the preecher is about as sure to say amen to it ez Jim Teesters dog is to be in evrybodys way whenever there is a funeril in the meetin house.

I hadent ben to wun ov them freenology lekturs fur I cudent hardly tell the time when, and as Semanthy and the gals was all dredful ankshus to go, and it didnt kost nuthin, and we wuzzent a workin the hosses mutch, I kunkluded that we mite as well go up the fust evenin; but after we got started, it turned out to be so entertainin that we cudent hardly bear the thawts ov missin a meetin, tho the rodes broke up and got dredful bad before they was more thun haff over with.

It did beet all, Jess, how keen the perfesser was who dun the talkin. He knode things that I dont bleeve he ever lurnt frum any skule teecher. He

had sum great big maps a hangin up on the walls that made me feel as onkumfortable at fust as tho I was in a powder faktry; but I got kind a yust to um, and dident mind um mutch, after Ide ben there a few times.

There was wun ov a skinned man that lookt as tho he felt most as onkumfortable as that feller they have stretched out in all the almanicks, and there was sum uthers that was even wuss butchered up thun he was. Rite behind the pull pit was a monsus big pikter ov a fellers hed, who must a ben most as big agin as the giunt that David killed; and the kewrious thing about it was that they had it divided out into places like pidgun holes in a ritin desk, and these was all crowded as full ov pikters as a gogafy.

The perfesser hissself wore specks, but they was geered to hang ruther low on his noze, and he hardly ever looked thru um. He sed he yust to be a doktor, and had fur a long time praktist medasun, and besides his freenology bizness he also cured korns, and sold things fur you to put in your butes to drive oph the roomatizzum, in addition to peddlin bitters that wud cure most anything and giv you an appetite fur brekfust, and sope that wud take the greese out ov Sunday go to meetin things. He cud also tell your forchun, and advise you what to do to keep your hogs frum gittin the kollery, at reesunable charges. He was a desperit smart man, no matter how you tuke him, and cud talk about anything by the hour as peart as sumbody a readin out ov a book to you.

The meetin house was crowded evry nite, and

nobody thawt ov gittin started fur home before the town klok struck ten. I furgot to say that the perfesser wud also feel yure hed, and tell you what you was good fur, and who you ort to marry, fur a haff a dollar. Evry nite he wud examine sum-bodys hed free gratis fur nuthin before fokes, and it did beet all how klose he cud kum to a body in the ginerall run. I cudent a told you any more myself about Unkel Peeleg Wilkins thun that feller did, and he hadent never seen nur heerd tell ov him before he begun to run his fingers around thru his hair nuther. If he had akshully seen Unkel Peeleg, with his own ize, a turnin pale and a skcratchin fur the town pump in a hurry, he cudent hav piktered out any more kumplete what affekt it wud hav on the old man to onexpectedly git after him fur munny; and it was the same way with Kurnel Soundin Brass.

He hadent no more thun laid his hand on the top ov the Kurnels hed before he sed he was inclined to take a leadin posishun, and keep it, if he had to raze rukshuns to do it. He sed the Kurnel dident bleeve in hidin his lite under a bushel basket, and wud as soon think ov doin good jest fur the sake ov doin it as I wud to set down to the dinner table with a kote on. The Widder Tanner and Marthy Persimmon and Jooly Ann Dooly and Grandaddy Nucks, and lots ov uthers, was also as well piktered out as tho the perfesser had ben razed with um; but it did beat all the way he missed it on me. I dont kno how it kum, but he dident tell a single thing that kum within a mild ov me. In phact, the most that he sed about me was downrite

skandlus; and if he hadent a ben so good natered, and sed what he did about me in a way that made all the fokes think he was only a jokin—fur they lafft like a party breakin up at most evrything he sed—I dont kno but what I shud hav got into a downrite fuss with him, and hav threatened to make him prove it. If strangers had a heerd him they wudent a never hav mistrusted me to be a man who pays sixteen dollars a yeer fur his preechin—or that is, I did, ontill it was thawt best by sum ov our most religyus peepul to kut down the preechers wages, sense which I hav ben a givin twelve. But instid ov makin me out as ginerous as that, the perfesser jest about as good as hinted that I was stingy; fur he sed he lowed that if anybody didnt exackly understand how to squeeze a three cent peece ontill it lookt bigger thun a dollar, mebbe they cud git sum pints frum me that wud help um.

He also sed he bleeved that if anybody cud stand up a hoss hair and hide behind it I cud do it, at which the peepul lafft with as mutch vim as a hired gal wud shake a karpud; but ov korse it was the nonsense ov the thing that tickled um, bekaws evry body that knoze me knoze that I alwas hav ben too free handed with munny fur my own good, and as fur hidin anywhere, why Jess, I never think ov sech a thing; tho I will own up that I do like to git behind a post at prayer meetin, fur ten chances to wun if the preecher sees me heze sure to kall on me, and prayin in public is sumthin Ive alwuz had to be dredful keerful about, and Ide ruther chop wood all day any time thun to undertake it. It flusters me so that it makes me shiver evry time I think ov it

fur a week afterwards, and it dries my throte up so that its the hardest kind ov work to swaller.

The old feller sed sum good things about me tho, and it may be that the reasun why he didnt say a good many more was that mebbe my hair was too long and thick fur him to make out jest where my bumps lade and what shape they was; fur I never like to git my hair cut in kold wether fur wun thing; and fur anuther, sense Izzickers gone away there haint nobody around the house that kun do it, and you kno what it means, Jess, to hav to go to a barber shop, where they make it their bizness to hav no mercy on any man who has a little munny left.

Ide like to tell you more about how interestin the perfessers perseedins was, and what a jam ov fokes there was there evry nite to hear him, and how even Nate Forbus stade away frum lodge to go there, and what a turribul brisk market he had fur his doktor stuff, and how heeps ov fokes who cudent hardly skeer up munny to git bread with, pade four bits to hav their heds felt and their kar-rickters rit out, and how even Grandaddy Nucks furgot that times was hard and bawt five dollars wuth ov the fellers bitters to see if it wudent limber his jintz up; but I have rote ontill my bak bone feels as tho I cudent never git it stratened out agin, and so I bleeve Ide better stop and rest awhile.

Jim Teeester's Dog.

Ime a beginnin to think that sumbody ort to make it their bizniss to see that a law is passt aginst allowin dogs to kum to meetin, no matter who they

belong to. I like a dog as well as anybody. provided heze any akount and will let sheep alone; but I never did bleeve in lowin um to make theirselves at home in a meetin house, and Ime down on it now wuss thun ever I was. I dont mind the time that I ever saw Jim Teester any where that his dog wuzzent with him, and so when he jined meetin and got to kummin to Church, I dont kno but what it peered all right to nearly all ov us that his dog shud have as mutch privilege in the meetin house ez Jim had. At any rate I kno it wuzzent long ontill it begun to seem jest as natcheral ez moonshine that Jim Teesters dog shud kum to meetin ez reglar as the preecher did. He was on hand purty ny evry Sunday, and peered to take a monsus site ov kumphert in kummin to meetin. But then Jims dog was an unkommon smart whiffit, and had been so keerfully brung up that he had better manners thun sum children. He alwas knode how to behave hisself, no matter what kind ov a turn the meetin tuke; and if there was a funeril in the Church, that dog knode it as well ez I did, and he cud carry hisself jest as sollum and strate as any ov the rest ov um. There wuzzent never a grane ov truble so long as Jims dog was the only wun



that got into the meetin house, but jest as sure as anybody else wud bring a dog with um, Jims pup wud be sure to backslide. I spoze mebbe he lowed that he had rites there that none of the rest ov um had, and he bleeved in stickin up fur um. The last kase ov that kind happened last Sunday nite, when a log hawler frum over toards Muddy Water kum to meetin and brung his dog with him.

He was a monsus big spotted hown, with ears so tremenjus big that he looked ez meek as fox fire. He follered his master into meetin and curled up under the seat that he sot down on, and Ike speckt mebbe hede a snoozed there durin the whole sarmint without disturbin nobody, if it hadent a ben fur Jim Teesters dog, who soon snuffed him out and begun to chase him all over the meetin house. Ov korse that made fokes snicker and bothered the preecher like evrything. I knode there wudent be no kullekshun tuke, bekoz they never do pass the hat on Sunday evenins, and so as the preecher was a tellin us lots ov things about the Jooze that I hadent never heerd ov, I was enjoyin myself ez well as I ever kin in meetin a lissenin to him, when them dogs got me so upsot that all ov my thawts went a bug huntin, and I was pestered so that I soon begun to feel downrite krabbit. It peered as tho Teesters pup had made up his mind that the log hawlers hown shudent hav a minnits peace in that meetin house. No matter where he got, Jims dog was rite after him and hektered his life most out. Wunst the poor feller got under the seat where Bruther Tinklum Simbul sot, and nocked his plug hat over, but the minnit he dun it Bruther

Simbul fetcht him over the noze with his kane, and with a howl that peered to have tears in it, away he went agin with Jim Teesters dog rite after him. The next place he stopped was under Grandaddy Nuckzes cheer, where the old man alwas sets rite klose up in frunt ov the preecher; but all the inkurridgement he got there was a bat over the hed frum the old mans ear trumpet that must a made him dizzy, and the next minnit he had sprung up into the pull pit, and went to shivverin rite there at the feet ov Bruther Skybuster, who jest then was a makin the lamps jump in tryin to make the peepul furgit that there was any disturbance.

The preecher was so tuke bak that he furgot all about the pint he was a tryin to make, and stepped square on the dogs tail afore he knode it. That made him giv a kuppul ov the yelpinest yelps I ever heerd a dog yelp, as he shuk the dust off ov hissself and got out ov that pull pit. Jest as the hown got back onto the floor agin he met Jim Teesters dog, who was a kummin up on a ruther brisk trot to see what had bekum ov him, and quicker thun a body cud think, there wuz sech a change in his sperrits that a good manny ov um sticks to it yit that that hown dog must a ben struck rite there with hyderfoby, fur instid ov givin a whine and sneakin away with his tail between his legs as he had ben a doin, what duz he do but grab Jim Teesters dog by the nape ov the neck, and go to tellin him as plain as a dog cud tawk that he wudent stand any more ov his nonsense. I tell you, Jess, fur a kupple ov minnits or so things in that meetin house was turrible excitin.

I dont kno how they dun it, but finally, by kickin and poundin and draggin, they sum how or uther stopt the frakus, and got them dogs out ov the meetin house without nun ov the men a kummin to a nock down, tho not ontill things had gone so fur that Jim Teester and the log hawler shuke their phists in wun anuthers faces. Ov korse the preechers sarmint was spilt kumpleetly, and he had to bring the meetin to a stop before he had even got into a kumfortable swett; and with sech a kongergashun as he had there that nite—why, Jess, if it hadent a ben fur them dogs, I bleeve in my soul he cud a preeched two hours without tirin a hair ov his hed; and at the wages we pay him, it seems to me its a shame that he didnt hav a chance to do it. And thats why I say that Ive had anuff ov dogs bein allowed to kum to meetin; and if I cud hav my way about it, the sextunt wud git his walkin papers in mity short meeter if he didnt keep um all out hereafter.

Babies in Church.

Babies in meetin are bad anuff when they are bad, but thaire a good deal wuss when they are too good. When a baby is big anuff to krawl or run around, and gits a noshun into its hed that it must git all over the meetin house while the preechin is a goin on, I dont kno ov anything short ov settin the bildin on fire that cud do much more mischuff. It spiles the preechin altogetther, and makes evrybody wish that the yungun had a muther who wud take keer ov it. I dont kno how it is with uther

fokes, but I kno that as fur me I never did bleeve in turnin a meetin house into a baby show. I like babies as well as anybody—when thaire asleep; but I say its not the right thing to take um to Church, and spile the meetin fur evrybody else, jest to show oph how kute they kin kro, or krawl, or holler, or walk, or trot, or anything else that wud be dredful nice at home, but which gits to be most desperit mizrabable when it is dun in meetin.

Jest a kupple ov munts or so ago, Feeby Chipps, Dave Chippses wife, brawt her yungest chile to meetin, and I kno there wuzzent a man in the kongergashun who wudent a ben willin to pay sumthin fur a good opperchunity to spank it, and evry womun there knode that all it had ben brung fur was jest to show it oph. While the preecher was a prayin, its muther turned it loose; and it went to rummidgin all over evrywhere, and finally it started fur the pull pit. When it got up purty klose, and rite out where evrybody cud see it, it stood and watched the preecher, and goo gude fur a spell; and then it krawled up and sot down on his heels, and tried to play hobby hoss, but in so doin its feet flew up, and it fell oph on its hed, which struck the floor so sollid that sum ov us was afeerd its hed was busted; but to the disappointment ov sum more ov us, it turned out that it wuzzent,



and without a whimper it immejutly perseeded to git into more mischuff.

It found a lantern under the pull pit bench, and went to rollin it around and spillin the greese out, ontill it stumbled over the preechers feet, who was still a goin on with his prayin, and down it went agin. Then it got bak down on the floor, and *got a holt ov Grandaddy Nuckzes ear trumpet, and run oph with it; and so it kep a goin, here and there, and gittin fust into wun mischuff and then anuther, ontill finally Bruther Skybuster jest had to stop and keep still fur a minnit or so; hopin its muther wud go and git it; but Feeby was so tickled and proud over it, to see the way it was a showin oph, and how airnest the peepul was a watchin it, that she never thawt ov meddlin with it, and let it race around to its harts kontent.

I never seen Bruther Skybuster so worked up as he was that day. It jest peered as tho he cudent git started on his sarmint, and at last he giv up tryin, and stopt, and sed:

"If the muther ov that chile luvs the Lord, I hope shele take keer ov it, and giv the rest ov us a chance to wurshup."

At that, Feeby sprung up, and the way she gethered up her yungun, and went out ov the meetin house, with her heels a krackin, was a kawshun, sayin, as she dun so:

"When that preecher gits me bak here agin it will do him good."

Nun ov the Chippzes has ben bak to meetin sense, and Bruther Gimps tells me that Dave sez hele never pay anuther cent ov quarteridge ontill

after Bruther Skybuster leaves the sirkut. I was so tickled tho, at the way the preecher dun, that the next time I went to town I tuke him a load ov good strate stove wood, and I dont intend to charge him a bit more thun full price for it nuther.

Bruther Skybuster ginerally puts up with sech things, and gits along the best he kin without sayin mutch about it; but old Bruther Samsun Growler yust to speak rite out in meetin in ruther strong plain English, when he was on the sirkut, and it got so fur a spell while he was with us that sech a thing as seein a yung chile in meetin hardly ever happened. I mind one time that Barbry Grimes bawt Henry to meetin with her when he was about six munts old, and jest when Bruther Growler had got his feet well under him, and was a goin it dredful nice, that chile waked up out ov a sound sleep, and tuke a noshun that he was a havin a monsus site ov trubble about sumthin, and if sumbody had ben a stickin pins into him he cudent a made any more fuss about it thun he did do fur ez mutch as a quarter ov an hour, without showin any sines at all ov wearin his lungs out; and yit Barbry sot there, a lookin strate at the preecher, as onkunserned as tho she hadent a bawt the chile to meetin with her, tho evrybody else was a fidgitin around, and a lookin mad anuff to bite sole lether.

At last Bruther Growler peered to be so stirred up that he cudent stand it no longer, and stopt rite in the middle ov his sarmint, and lookin strate at Sister Grimes, he sed:

“If the muther ov that chile will kum up here

and finish my preechin fur me, Ile take her baby out ov doors and try to find out whats the matter with it."

When he sed that, it was a kawshun to see how quick Barbry grabbed up her baby, and giv it a shake that purty ny throde its neck out ov jint, and then she went out ov the meetin a sailin, with her hed up in the air and her mouth shut ez tite as the lid ov a snuff box; and that was the last time she ever sot her foot in the Ciderville meetin house ontill Henry got big anuff to kno how to behave hisself.

Anuther way that Bruther Growler had ov tellin the wimmin to take their babies out was to stop and say:

"Ike speckt the muther ov that chile is afeerd to take it out fur feer it will bother me and make me furgit sum ov my sarmint, but it wont. She kin git rite up and take it out now, and it wont bother me a bit. Ime never disturbed by sech a thing as that. Goin out with a kryin baby mite flustrate a yung preecher, but it never bothers us old wuns."

I dont mean to say that wimmin shudent never go to meetin and take their babies with um, bekoz I spoze theres times when sum ov um cudent man-nidge to go at all onless they did; but what Ime down on with all my mite is this thing ov their settin there stone still and allowin um to bawl and bawl ontill they spile the meetin fur evry body else; and when they find out that their yunguns is reglar meetin killers, and they kant make nuthin else out ov um, it peers to me that they kin do lots more good by not takin um at all; or if they feel as tho

they jest must go, my noshun is that they ort to set bak klose anuff to git out quick and easy the minnit the chile begins to beller. If they wud only do that, and alwas hav the yungun out ov doors by the time it giv the secund yelp, it wudent make evrybody feel as tho the plasterin was liable to peel oph at any minnit and drop down on um without warnin, evry time they shud happen to see a womun with a baby kum into meetin.

Tryin^g to be Generous.

I bleeve Ile say a few words about the disappintments that hav kum to me on akount ov belongin to meetin not turnin out to be the proffitable bizniss that the preechers and sum uthers is all the time a tryin to make out that it is. The noshun ov proffits was alwuz an idee that tuke holt ov me dredful strong, and I dont kno ez I kin say jest at this minnit whether I shud ever have jined meetin or not, if I hadent a felt middlin certun that, sumhow or uther, I didnt exzackly kno how, I was a goin to make sumthin out ov it; but after tryin it fur purty ny forty yeer I kant keep from ownin up to myself that I hav been disappointed. There haint never ben a time when its kost me less than five dollars a yeer for quarteridge, and frum that all the way up to sixteen, and I kant see where Ive ever made anything at all in kold kash by belongin to meetin; and yet I hav tuke the preecher at his word a heap ov times, and hav kast rite smart ov bred on the water more thun wunst, to find out fur myself whether it raily wud kum back at any kind ov a payin rate or not.

It wuzzent so very long after I jined meetin, I mind, that we had a preecher who cudent hardly preech without havin sumthin to say about the Lord luv'n a cheerful giver, and that givin to the Lord was about the quickest plan anybody cud take to git rich. I didnt bleeve so much in it; but the man kep a urgin it so konstant that after awhile I begun to think that mebbe it mite be wurth my while to try it, and so while they was a razin means to



put up a new meetin house, I jes kunkluded wun day that I wud turn over a new leaf and begin to be ginerous, and eether prove that the preecher hadent ben openin the Skripchers to us jest rite, or git rich in a hurry, I didnt keer mutch which. So I sined two dollars toards putt'n up the

bildin, with the privilidge ov payin it in wood, knowin that I cud take a wet day and send the hired hand up with a jag that I wudent never miss; but I hope to live to see my chin kum to a sharp pint, Jess, if it didnt turn out exzackly the uther way frum what that preecher sed it wud; fur instid ov gittin the dredful big profit fur which I kind a looked, a heffer that was wuth ten dollars ov any mans munny slipped down a bank and broke her neck before a week, and the wurst ov it was that she was ded so long that the beef was spilt too bad fur

home yuse before we found the beest, and, fallin on a piece ov a tree top, the hide had three bad holes in it rite where it was wuth the most.

That was sech a disappointment to me that I dident try no more sech speckelashuns fur ever so long afterward; but at last we had anuther preecher kum along who yust to say things about givin that sounded so nice that there was times when I sot there in meetin and cud feel my mouth a waterin as I thawt ov the turrible proffits he picktered out, without no seemin resk about it. And then the amazin thing about it was, Jess, that the preecher akshully peered to bleeve his own dockturn, and put it into praktiss, fur whenever the hat was passed he wud moshen fur the steward to kum to him, and he wud out with his pocket buke and put sumthin in it hisself.

I watched him a doin that fur a few Sundays, and it satisfied me that the man was in airnest, and it got so before long that I cud begin to feel my hand a kleepin toards my pocket whenever Ide see any body a kummin toards me with a basket. Ov korse I dropped in a kopper now and then ez reckless ez a child wud swaller sugar, but I mannidged to let it go at that ontill wun Sunday the preecher sed in a sarmint that he knode frum his own experience that there wuzzent anything that pade better thun bein ginerous with the Lord; and when he sed that I jest cudent stand it no longer, and so when the opperchunity was giv fur us to let ourselves loose and foller our feelins, by givin all we wanted to toards doin sumthin fur the heathen, I was jest fool anuff to bleeve what that preecher sed, and when the basket

kum to me I dropped in a quarter that didnt hav a hole in it, and I didnt ask fur no change back nuther.

This time, mind you, what I giv was in kleeer munny. There wuzzent no chance fur truck and dicker, and yit in spite ov that, notwithstandin I hadent had but sixteen hundred bushels ov wheat to sell that year, when I ort to had two thousand, what do you spoze happened? Well, Ile tell you. That very nite there kum a frost that killed all the fruit, and that summer we didnt hav a peach nur a pear nur a cherry, and evry bit ov garden sass we had up was mowed down ez slick as a whissel. And yit the preecher had got that munny out ov me by deklarin that the Bible said in kold print that I shud make sumthin by it.

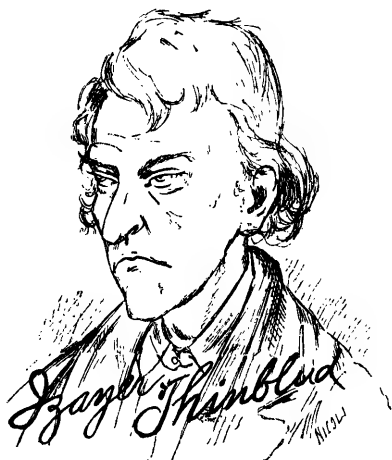
I cud tell you ov a heap ov uther kases too, I spoze, where Ive undertook to be ginerous, and hav purty ny killed myself in tryin to be a cheerful giver, and yit in nun ov um hav I ever ben inkurridged by findin dymunts in oyster supe, or silver sand in the kreek, or munny in the rode, but more frekent it has turned out that sumthin wud alwas happen to make me poorer thun I was. When things turn out that way, Jess, how kin anybody blame us fur not skatterin munny like the preechers think we shud?

CHAPTER V

THE MONEY QUESTION.

The Quarterly Conference.

WEVE jest ben a havin our Quarterly Konference, which is alwas a dredful strainin time fur the stewards, and a mity ankshus time fur the preecher. Its too downrite bad that peepul cant be religyus without yuzin up so mutch munny. If belongin to meetin was only sumthin that a body cud do without no more trubble nur expense thun razin a little patch ov buckwheat fur pankakes, I kno sum ov us wud enjoy it a heap better; but its this havin to think all the time that quarterly meetin is a kummin jest as sure as shuze a wearin out, and that yule hav to sell sumthin to help pay the preecher, that makes you feel evry wunst in a while ez tho you had burs in your sox. Sumtimes when Ime alone, a shellin seed korn or a sproutin pertaturs, I find myself a thinkin about a



good many things that makes my jints ake, and this is alwuz sure to be wun ov um. I tell you, Jess, sixteen dollars a yeer, jest fur preechin, duz peer to me to be a turribul waste ov munny, no matter how I look at it, and sumtimes Ime afeerd Ile find out on the judgment day that Ive throde away evry last cent ov it; but I dont see no way ov gittin around it, and so I reckon Ile hav to keep on lettin the preecher jest reach down into my pocket and help hissself evry three munts, as long as I live.

By the time me and Unkel Peeleg Wilkins got back frum the pump, the persidin elder, Bruther Nathun Faithful, had got the meetin to runnin, and the stewards was a bringin in their reports; and I dont kno when Ive heerd more growlin, outside ov an animul sho, thun I heerd that mornin.

Bruther Izayer Thinblud was there frum Muddy Water, with wun hand tide up in a sling; and I reckon mebbe thats how he kum to be on hand, fur they say heze a turribul airnest man, and never wastes a minnit when heze able to be a goin. Well, he got up, and kleered his throte, and sed that times was so desperit tite jest now, on his part ov the sirkut, that it was almost onpossible to raze any munny that fokes didnt jest hav to pay, and the stewards had only ben able to kulleckt about two thirds ov their sheer ov the preechers wages; but he knode that wudent make no difference to Bruther Skybuster. He cud jest report it pade, and like ez not they wud raze it when times got better. Bruther Thinblud sed the sirkus hed jest ben thru there, and about all the loose change had

ben karried oph. He had alwas notist that it was monsus hard to kulleckt quarteridge when there was shows around.

Bruther Thinblud is a dredful peart bizniss man, and had ben keerful not to forgit to charge Bruther Skybuster with a dollar and four bits fur hoss shooin, which had ben donated to him by Jerry Bellus, who has a blacksmith shop down klose to the burg. Jerry dont belong to meetin, and hardly ever goze, tho his wife duz rite smart; but heze tuke kunsiderable ov a shine to Bruther Skybuster, and told him that whenever he wanted his hoss shod to kum to him, and it wudent kost him nuthin. It peers that the preecher tuke him at his word, and got sum work dun almost immejut, which he offered to pay fur, out ov manners sake; but as Jerry wudent take nuthin, he lowed that wud be the end ov it. But Bruther Thinblud was too smart fur him, and fetched it in against him. I dont spoze theres more thun wun steward in a duzzen who is alwuz keerful to look out fur sich things.

Bruther Jasun Patch was there frum Shakeville, and he had purty mutch the same thing to report as Bruther Thinblud. The show had not only hurt them a good bit too, but Doktor Sephus Blister, wun ov their richest members, and a feller they cud alwas depend on to help um out whenever they got to klose pickin, had ben a gittin his back up about sumthin that didnt go to suit him in the Sunday skule; and the Dock had declared that he wudent never pay anuther dollar to keep the Church frum sinkin, as long as Pyus Wilyums was allowed to be

the sooperintendant, and hav his say all the time about how things was to go. This had cut the Shakeville fokes so short that they was obleeged to be thirty seven dollars and forty four cents behind with Bruther Skybuster; but then he cud jest report um square, and it wud kum out all rite sumtime.

At Shakeville the preecher had sumtimes ben intertained at the tavern, and when wun ov the stewards went to see Tom Pinchum, the landlord, and git his quarteridge, he sed he reckoned mebbe he dident owe nun on that akount, and so ov kourse Bruther Patch fetched that up against Bruther Skybuster. There was also a few uther outside matters, sech as shoo mendin or buggy fixin, which the stewards happened to hear about, and turned in as so mutch kleeer kash pade to the preecher. It seems a pity that there haint sum way ov findin out how much the preecher has tuke in by marryin peepul, fur in these hard times we need evry cent we kin git to help swing us around the korners.

Ciderville was only twenty seven dollars behind, but nobody minded that mutch; coz we all knode that if the wust kum to the wust, sum ov us cud see Majer Bigtub, who carries on the Ciderville still house, and git it out ov him, bekawz the Majer is a powerful fine man, and is alwas red dy to go down into his pocket as brisk as anybody fur anything he takes a noshun to. He dont belong to meetin hisself, but his wife and both ov his gals duz; and he attends middlin reglar, and alwas puts sumthin in the basket.

We fell short sum at Ciderville by not gittin nuthin at all frum Bruther Sollymun Gimps, it appearin that he had alreddy pade his quarteridge in milk; tho ov korse we figgered it up as well as we cud, and charged it to the preecher the same as so mutch reddy munny. Bruther Gimps only lives about a mild frum town, and as he milks a whole barn yard full ov cows, he kind a tuke pitty on Bruther Skybuster, who haint got any. and told him last fall that if he wud send out wun ov his yunguns evry day, he cud hav all the milk he wanted. Ov korse the preecher was mity glad to do it, and he immejutly quit buyin frum Jo Klabber, the milkman; but when the stewards went to Bruther Gimps after munny, he sed he had alreddy pade his quarteridge, and they cudent git nuthin out ov him. Sumtimes I think mebbe its a good thing fur peepul down his way who keep chickens, that Bruther Gimps has got religyun.

Bruther Tinklun Simbul got out ov payin his quarteridge bekawz his wife had bilt the kawphy at the ise kreem supper; and Bruther Kalup Chiller had furnished sum boards to make a walk at the passunidge, and so he didnt pay nuthin. It kums mity handy to hav these offsets fur this, that, and tuther, to fetch up against the preecher; but Ive got sech a desperit bad memory that, to save my gizzard, I cudent think ov a single thing I cud turn into munny, and so I had to fork over four dollars in klear silver; and yit Bruther Skybuster had a look about him as tho he hadent slep well.

The only Ciderville steward who has razed evry-thing, and didnt hav no growlin to do nur no off-

sets to bring in, was Isum Klover. Sum how or uther he had mannidged to hunnysuckel around evry sole on his list, and git evry blessed cent they had agreed to pay out ov um in munny; and I dont bleeve he cud a got much happier in kamp meetin thun he peered to be that mornin. His ize was ez brite ez brass buttins, and there was times when it peered to me that his face was almost shinin. Theres no two ways about it, Jess, if theres anybody in the Ciderville meetin house that gits the wuth ov his munny back fur bein religyus, I gess its Isum. Heze got so that he makes ez mutch ov a bizness ov it as I do ov farmin, and I shudent wunder frum his looks sumtimes but what it paze him a preshus site better.

To evry bodys bewunderment Foggs Rill had not only razed evry cent ov their quarteridge, but they was a kunsiderable bit ahed, and I found out afterwards that they had akshully made the preecher sum presents that nobody had hed the gumshun to think ov kountin in as munny. Old man Jaxsun, who is hed man down there, who alwuz looks as pleasant ez tho he had sumthin hansum in the bank, no matter when you meet him, and who, they say, has stood by that Church thru thick and thin fur the last thirty years as stiddy as Noer did when he was a bildin the ark, he was there a lookin ez chipper as tho hede never ben sick a day in his life; and so was Hyrum Lake, a yung feller who has the name ov goin to meetin as reglar ez I salt my kattle; and so was Sister Polly Beetle, a womun who has sech turribul good helth that sheze alwuz happy in spite of her religyun. All three of um is stew-

ards down at Foggs Rill, and mebbe thats the reasun the munny was all razed; but thaire evry last wun ov um as energetic ez fleeze on a dog, and they say it takes rite smart ov bad weather to stop um when they start out to do anything.

Bruther Jaxsun made a moshun that purty ny made me shiver, as hot as it was, and that was this: He wanted to hav Bruther Skybusters wages razed anuther hundred dollars a yeer. He sed they cud git their sheer ov it without a grane ov trubble, and he was in fur it kleeer down to his boot heels. He sed a good many hired hands was a makin more munny thun our preecher did, and they didnt hav to work ny as hard. I thawt in my sole that Unkel Peeleg Wilkins was about to die from hart stop-pidge. His face turned a kind of a mildude bloo all over, and he had to grab up his kane and start fur the town pump. I dont bleeve it wud a took moren about three minnits more ov that turribul strane to hav finished the old man. Ov korse we voted the moshun kleeer down as soon ez we cud ketch our breth to do it, and immejutly begun to sing the docksology without bein told to.

I went over and pumped sum water on Unkel Peelegs hed; but he was still so dredful trimbly that he cudent hardly walk, and so I had to go home to dinner 'with him.

Helpinø the Church in Chunk's Hollow.

Last Sunday Bruther Skybuster preeched a sarmint that made him as hoarse as a ground squirrel before he got haff thru with it, and the reason was

that he was after us agin hot and hevvy fur munny. He tried, ontill the winders fairly shook, to show us that it was evrybodys duty who was on their way to hevvin to be middlin ginerus with their munny. I dont think Ive ever seen anybody look so distressin mizrabable outside ov a dokter shop as Unkel Peeleg Wilkins and Bruther Sollymun Gimps did under that sarmint, and I must say that durin a good sheer ov the time I was in kunsiderable ov a cold shiver myself. I



I tell you, Jess, its havin so mutch ov that kind ov preechin in sech pinchin hard times as these that makes us old men turn gray so fast. It makes me feel a good bit diskurridged evry time I hear a preecher take a text that sounds as tho the stewards wud soon be passin the bas-

kits. Between kounty improvements, and lytnin rod men, and meetin houses, its a wunder to me that theres any ov us out of the poor house. Its a gittin to kost so skandlus mutch, jest fur the privilege ov stayin around and drawin our breth, that its a wunder to me that any ov us farmers has the kurridge to go to mill and git back agin.

Thaive ben a bildin new bridges all over the kounty, and, as tho wood wuzzent deer anuff, thaive ben a yusin irun to make um kost as mutch as possible. Last yeer they bilt a new jail that was

more thun good anuff to hold meetin in, and this summer thaire at work on a new kourt house, on which they are so monsus keerless about the expense that it will supprize me if it dont last ontill the judgment day. Thaire a makin it fairly brissel with munny frum the foundashun to the cave troff, and evry time I look at it, it makes me feel as tho I had frost in my knee jint.

But in spite ov all these things, Bruther Skybuster will keep on stirrun us up, and tryun to keep us frum gittin any injoyment out ov religyun, by pesterin us evry wunce in a while fur more munny. Weeve been so ding donged and beliggered here lately to be a givin all the time, that Semanthy sez I groan in my sleep ever so mutch more thun I yust to.

Ov korse theres a few things I dont kno mutch about, but it peers to me that if Bruther Skybuster wud say less about munny in his preechin he wudent find it haff as hard to git people who are wuth property to jine meetin. No man who has worked ontill his backbone is krooked likes to walk into a meetin house in his old days, and hav to begin throwin away his munny as soon as he gits there. People who slave all their lives, and purty ny go without things in sickness in order to git property anuff to keep um in a stoo as long as they live, are mity tender harted in sum things, and bein hecktered all the time to giv away what its kost um so mutch to git, is sumthin that makes um dredful oneasy, and mity shy about kummin to meetin; but it peers to be next to onpossible to git preechers to understand it.

Ike spekt I cud name a duzzin ov our naburs who cud be got into the Church without hardly any trubble, if they was only satisfied they cud jine and never hav a word sed to um about munny afterwards. There haint no trubble about gittin peepul willin to be religyus. Its this thing ov gittin um willin to pay their quarteridge, and stand fire without flinchin whenever the preecher gits after um fur more munny, that the drawback kums in. Make goin to meetin as free as watchin a sirkus kum in, and evry body will go and jine.

What Bruther Skybuster wanted with munny a Sunday was to help the Church over at Chunks Holler to bild um a new meetin house, in place of their old wun which was burned down a while back. I dont kno ov anything he cud a menshuned that wud a throde mutch more ov a damper over the meetin. Several men had to go out and see to their hosses before he got haff thru, and a good many uthers looked as tho they was sorry they hadent jined the Quakers. Unkel Peeleg Wilkins had to go to the town pump before the preecher got haff thru, and he was tuke so faint that he cudent git back agin. That man will be found dead yit between the meetin house door and the town pump sum ov these days, if the preecher dont lurn to be more keerful about how he preeches.

But altho Bruther Skybuster was in most dredful airnist about wantin to git help fur the Chunks Holler fokes, he didnt sumhow or ruther peer to be able to stir the peepul up as he wanted to; and altho he swet until you cudent hardly tell what kuller his ize waz, he didnt get mutch more thun

a glimpse ov the fokezes pocket books. When the kullekshun was took it was found that there was seventy two cents and a few buttins in the basket, and Ime jest about sure that a haff a dollar ov that kum from Isum Klover, bekaws sumbody put in a fifty cent peece, and there wuzzent anybody else there who is so turrible reckless with munny.

Theres anuther little peece ov nuze that I reckon Ide better try to tell you before I spile my goose-quill. Durin this last week a feller got up on a box on the public square wun afternoon, rite in frunt ov Kurnel Brasses grocery, and by sum ov the slickest talkin anybody ever heerd outside ov a hoss market, he mannidged to sell more thun fifty haff inch peeces ov yaller sope, rapped up in bloo paper with a red string around it, at frum a dollar to five dollars a chunk, as quick as he cud hand um out and take in the munny. What ketched evrybody was, that they thought the chap was eether drunk or crazy, and didnt kno what he was a doin; but I reckon frum the way things turned out that he kin mannidge to git along fur a spell yit before havin to git the kourt to appint him a gardeen. You see it looked as tho the feller was a foldin up frum five to fifty dollars in munny with evry peece he sold, and besides that he said the stuff itself was the best thing that wás ever got up fur most evrything you cud think ov, frum drivin the fleeze out ov a blacksmith shop to curin sore ize and makin kows milk eezy, and he was a takin that plan to git it before the fokes and interduce it. I jest happened to be in town that day with a load ov pertaters I had sold to Leroy Pollyfox when I was up to

meetin on Sunday, but Ide a ben five dollars better oph if Ide a ben at home sick abed with hot iruns to my feet.

I kant tell you how turrible slick that feller was, Jess, and Ime puzzled most to deth to kno how he ever got that twenty dollar bill out ov the paper he sold me fur five, fur I saw him rap it rite up and hand it over to me ez plain as I ever saw a pankake. I didnt keer a walnut fur the sope, but I knode that the munny was all rite, fur Kurnel Brass had jest had it in his hands, and he sed so. It never wunst kum into my hed that the munny wudent be there when I opened the packidge; but it wuzzent, and no steel pen was ever made big anuff to tell you how near I kum to kickin the bucket when the truth that I had ben skinned clear down to the bone fust flashed over me. I felt as tho I was a bein drowneded in ice water, and its ben about all I cud do to talk without stutterin ever sense then. And yit the feller didnt peel me like he did sum ov the rest ov um. It kost Unkel Peeleg Wilkins ten dollars to kum along on his way to the post offiss while the feller was a doin his gassin. Bruther Kalup Chiller, they say, was ketched fur fifteen dollars, while Bruther Sollymun Gimps went home with his pockets ez good as turned rong side out, and his hart jest about broke.

The feller made us all promise that we wudent open our papers ontill we got home, fur fear it wud make the fokes feel bad who didnt hav no munny to buy any; and thats the way he kum to git so many ov us to spend evry cent we had or cud borry in buyin sope at what I shud think was about a

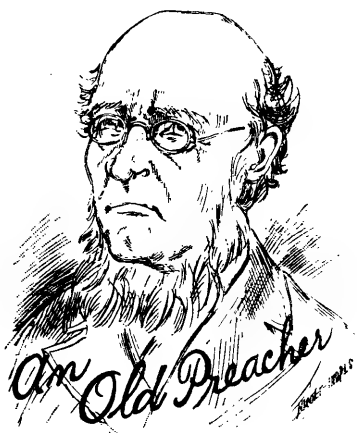
thousand dollars a pound. When I told Semanthy what Ide dun, the next mornin, I thawt in my sole she was about to be tuke with lockjaw. Her breth peered to leave her, and her ize turned purty ny klean over; but it was only a minnit or two before she got the yuse ov her speech agin, and I dont think Ive ever knode her to make better yuse ov it thun she did that mornin. She sed a good many things that made me feel ez tho my branes hed turned soft, and I felt too meek to drink kold tea fur moren two days afterward.

The only way Ive ben able to git a streek ov kumfort sense I was buzzled out ov that five dollars, has ben to think how mutch easier I got oph thun the rest ov um did; but five dollars fur sope, all at one klip, is a dredful sollum thing to happen to a feller, and I haint felt much wuss sense the buckwheat krop failed thun I do this mornin, Jess. Sum ov us hav about kunkluded that wele never kast anuther vote fur any man who wont go in fur havin such fellers as that sope peddler put where the dogs wont bite um, before they kin kum to Ciderville.

The Preacher Wants More Money.

Last Sunday I went to meetin, thinkin I cud brace bak in my seat and rest kumfortable, without nuthin to bother me, bekoz it haint offun that Bruther Skybuster gits after us fur munny on two Sundays hand runnin; but when I notist how dredful sollum he peered to be while the last hym was a bein sung, I begun to git monsus oneasy, fur fear

that mebbe I had missed it in kummin to Church that mornin, and before hede ben a preechin ten minnits I knode I had; and I wished then that I had tuke the old womuns advice, and gone to Jake Hetzels a visitin, as she wanted me to do, fur it was soon made mity kleeer to evrybody that the preecher was determined that sum ov us shudent git out ov that meetin house without leavin munny behind us that it had kost us a good deal ov swet to



git together. The fact ov the matter was, Jess, that altho Bruther Sky-buster had hed the basket shoved under our nozes the Sunday before, in tryin to raze sumthin toards bildin a noo meetin house fur them fokes over at Chunks Holler, he kum a chargin after us agin ruff shod, to git us to pony up a whole slather

ov means to giv to preechers when they git so old and krippled up with roomytiz that they kant do mutch at their trade any more. When we seen what was a kummin, both Unkel Peeleg Wilkins and me looked at wun anuther as tho we hadent a pertater left in the cellar; and I thawt in my soul that Bruther Sollymun Gimps was a goin to hav a spazzum rite there in meetin. He got as yaller in the face ez the leaves ov an old book, and it was a long spell before you wud hav spozed frum his looks that he had a drop ov blud in him.

Its my candid opinyun that if Bruther Gimps ever dies suddint, without bein struck by lytnin, it will be while sumbody is a tawkin to him about munny fur meetin matters. Heze a dredful prudent man, Bruther Gimps is; and is as kawshus about spendin munny as I am in handlin a rat trap. Heze got rite smart ov it, too; but heze had to work like goin to mill a foot fur evry cent ov it, and its like buryin a chile, purty ny, fur him to part with it too suddint. He owns nearly land anuff to make a township, and has morgidges by the arm full on sum ov the best property in Muskeetur Kounty; but heze so onassumin that he wears yarn gallusses, and lives in a house that sum fokes wudent let their hosses stay in. Evry wunst in awhile his wife gits her hed sot on havin a rag carput in the frunt room, but whenever she menshuns it he gits so nervus that the dog runs and hides frum him; and so sheze jest had to give up the idee ov it altogether. He never goze any funder away frum home thun he kin walk, and makes his brags that he never staid anywhere in his life where its kost him a cent fur a nites lodgin. I dont bleeve he ever parts with very much munny without sheddin tears, and wud most as soon bury his wife as to lose a kow. Heze alwas a klaimin that he luvs the Lord with all his hart, but nun ov his naburs has ever mis-trusted that he is in airnest about it. He wud like to travel and see the world, he sez, and nuthin wud suit him better thun to go to Ingunopolis sumtime, and see um kill hogs by masheenery; but it kosts so outrajus mutch to ride on the kars, and be away frum home over nite, that he jest kant afford it; and

besides that, theres so mutch to be seen to all the time around the place that he kant git away no way he kin fix it. Heze alwas on the go, doin sumthin that will save munny; and no matter how the wether is, you kin depend on it that hele be at work frum day lite till dark, as energetic as a kow tryin to throw down a fence. He wont hav to git mutch more property before heele fairly work hisself to deth tryin to take keer ov it.

Unkel Peeleg Wilkins is also purty ny as tender harted in munny matters as Bruther Gimps is. Evry wunst in awhile sum feller kums along who is so sharp that they kant keep him shut up long in States prison, and by makin the old man bleeve heze a goin to giv him a chance to make munny faster thun weeds kin grow, he jest as good as gits both hands in the poor fellers pockets before he findz out what ales him. Heze had lytnin rods put up on his barn ontill the bildin looks a good deal like a bird cage; and nearly evry shed on his primises is stacked full ov wuthless patent rites that kost him slathers and slathers ov munny; and it alwas happens that when they want to raze munny fur meetin purpusses, Unkel Peeleg has jest ben as good as fallin into the fire agin; and the consekwence is that the minnit the preecher reads a text that has a singel word that sounds like fork over in it, the old man gits so chilly that his hart wont hardly beat, and he has to start fur the town pump in a hurry, to git a drink ov water and kam hisself down before his blud gits so thick that sum ov his vanes mite bust.

Sumtimes Ime afeard that Unkel Peeleg wont

begin to live his days near out, onless we kin man-nidge sum how or uther to git us a preecher at Ciderville who wont never menshun munny in meetin, except in the wurst kind ov a kase ov need-cessity. Bruther Skybuster is a middlin good preecher in sum ways, but theres a good many ov us who wud git a good deal more kumfort out ov his preechin if hede only be more keerful in pickin out subjects to talk about, and wud dodge evry-thing that meant fur us to put our hands in our pockets. Before I jined meetin the preechers yust to be alwas makin their brags that salvashun was free; but I kin tell you, Jess, that it dont turn out that way in our naborhood. I dont bleeve theres ben a yeer ov my life sense I was tuke into the Church that I haint had to pay sumthin or uther fur the privilidge ov belongin; and it peers to me that the nearer I git to the end ov the jurny the more it kosts me. If it keeps on that way Ime afeard sum ov us will find out that hevvin is a tur-ribul deer place to go to.

But Ime a wunderin away at a dredful rate frum Bruther Skybuster and them old preechers. The fact is that when I git to thinkin about anything that puts me in mind ov how mutch it kosts us to try to behave ourselves down here in this wicked world, where evrything a body has to buy takes munny, it sets my pen to gallopin all over kreashun as reckless ez fleeze a bitin, and the fust thing I kno Ive sed things that ort to be skratched out agin. Outside ov eatin chicken, I dont think Ive ever knode Bruther Skybuster to take more interest in what was before him than he did last Sunday in

tryin to do sumthin to help the old preechers. If hede a ben pleadin his own kase I dont think he cud a ben any more in airnest about it thun he was. He told us a good many things that made the kongergashun look as sollum ez grave stones, and I wished more than wunst that I owned a barl ov munny, soze I cud put a kupple ov dollars in the baskit, without feelin it, when the kullekshun was took.

The preecher dun his level best to try to git us to see that it was our bounden duty to take keer ov the old preechers, even tho we had to take munny that was a drawin interest to do it with, and he koted kunsiderable Skripcher to prove it, notwithstanding evry verse brought a grone frum Unkel Peeleg and a big amen frum Isum Klover; and, speakin ov Isum, wun ov the puzzlin things about his religyun to me is, how under the sun kin that man look as happy ez he duz in meetin when he knoze the preecher will be sure to wind up his sarmint by askin fur munny?

There was wun thing that Bruther Skybuster told us about preechers that interested me most as mutch ez gittin a big korn krop, and that was how cheap they used to work before they begun to git proud and wear broadkloth. He sed it yust to be the rules of the Church to low a preecher eighty dollars a yeer, wet or dry, without no washin or mendin, and then when he got married they wud giv him anuther eighty dollars to support his wife and git rich on. I dont think I ever saw Unkel Peeleg and Bruther Gimps look mutch happier thun they did when the preecher got to this part

ov his sarmint. They bothed chirked up rite away, and looked as bammy as a gal with a sun flower on her bonnet. The thickness in Unkel Peelegs breth left him immejut, and he begun to rub his hands and say amen as brisk ez tho he was hungry and cud smell dinner a cookin.

Eighty dollars a yeer fur preechin, or even a hundred and sixty, fur that matter, is more within the bounds ov reason thun preechers wages is in these times; and if that was the price now, I bleeve sum ov us wudent hav to lay awake and worry, and the stewards wudent hav to wear out so turribul mutch shu lether in doin their kullektin. If it was only that way now, and whoever has the say so wud pass a law aginst tryin to raze munny in meetin fur anything, except lites and firewood at the very furdest, it peers to me that sum ov us cud git along smuther in tryin to be religyus. At reasunable prices fur preechin I dont see why we cudent keep our Church chuck full ov members, and make it easy fur evrybody to pay their quarteridge, without havin to sell a kaff, or sumthin else that they had sot their harts on, to do it. If I didnt hav to shell out but two bits evry three munts, instid ov the four dollars Ime robbed ov now, I dont bleeve Ide feel haff as bad in cloudy wether as I do, and goin to meetin wudent seem as mutch like work to me as it duz.

But while Unkel Peeleg, and Bruther Gimps, and me, and sum more ov us, was a rubbin our hands and feelin good all over at the thawts ov cheep preechin, Bruther Skybuster begun to try to show that preechers raaly airned all they got, and a good

deal more sumtimes, and that if they was only paid fair wages while they was in the bizness, they wudent hav to kum to us with their hats in their hands when they got old and helpless.

I must say that Ive never looked at it in that way before, but had ginerally kunkluded that the munny Ive giv to preechers was a kind ov a dona-shun that I didnt expect to git nuthin back fur. Bruther Skybuster sed there wuzzent an old preecher anywhere hardly, but what cud buy hisself a house and lot if he had only been pade all the quarter-idge that had ben promised to him; but he sed there wuzzent any law to giv preechers their rites, and so a good menney didnt git um. He told ov a good many cases that he had knode ov where old preechers had akshully suffered fur the needcessities ov life, and then he had the stewards kum around to see how mutch they cud git out ov us. I made up my mind that I wud put a dime in the baskit anyhow, altho times is most outragus tite, and I dun so. Bruther Sollymun Gimps throd in sum kop-pers, and Isum Klover give three dollars, but Unkel Peeleg was so worked up in his feelins that he had to grab his hat and kane and start fur the town pump before they cud git to him with a baskit. I lurnt afterwards that the kullekshun footed up four dollars and sixty one cents, not kountin a kupple ov buggy washers that sumbody had throd in instid ov munny. If all the rest ov the meetin houses duz as well as ourn did, I reckon it will be quite a spell before we hear ov any more hard times amungst the old preechers.

The Ciderville Scissors Club.

Weve ben a needin a new karput fur the meetin house, and sum better lookin cheers fur the pull pit, this long while bak, and so Lem Hackelberrys wife and Sister Mirandy Pippys they tuke it into their heds that they wud go at it and see if they cudent kitter up sum kind ov a plan to raze munny anuff to buy what was needed, without nun ov the members a bein made to feel sorry that they ever jined meetin by havin to take the munny out ov their own pockets to pay fur um ; fur you kno, Jess, as well as I do, that no matter how keerful you are in mannidgin with meetin matters, this thing ov belonging to Church duz bleed a body most skandlus before you git thru with it, and sumtimes I git so out ov pashunce in seein the basket passt evry time I go to meetin that I most wish there hadent a never ben no Bible printed, to keep us oneezy all the time, and make us put our hands in our pockets a feelin after munny that ort to be put out at interest to bring in sumthin. Well, as I was a goin to say, them wimmin got their heds together, and they kunkluded that they wud hav a



little tee drinkin party at Sister Pippzes house, and invite a lot ov uther phemale Church members to meet with um there, and see if they cudent start a sowin sirkul, or sumthin thru which they cud sum how or uther hunnysuckel outsiders and yung fellers into givin up their munny to help pay fur that karput and them cheers.

So they got Jim Teesters boy to take around the invites to all the wimmin that they wanted, a tellin him to hint to each wun ov um that he had heerd it whispered that there was a goin to be a dredful good supper. Ov korse that fetched um out as thick as sparrers around a bred krust, and they dident hav no trubble at all in organizin what they kalled the Ciderville Wimmins Sizzers Klub, with fifteen or twenty members. Lem Hackelberrys wife was leckted cheerman, and Sister PIPPS was put in fur seketary.

The fust thing they dun was to have a konsurt in the meetin house, fur which the tickets was two bits, and nuthin at all was there to eat, not even peanuts; but they had musick, and pianer playin, and singin, and whisslun, and fiddlin, and I dont kno what all, and I dident hear ov anybody who was there who sed they begrudged what it kost um. They had a feller and two gals frum Grassburg, who had all tuke lessons frum a reglar perfesser, and I tell you, Jess, it was downrite wunderful how they cud warble.

Sum little gals also spoke peeces, and Jooly Ann Dooly whissled a race against the pianner, and beat it all holler, notwithstanding the playin was dun by the yung feller frum Grassburg, who was ez

strong in the arms as a blaksmith, and did pound it most onmerciful. Kurnel Soundin Brass and Bruther Tinklun Simbul both made speeches, and told how desperit glad they was that the Ciderville meetin house had so many energetic wimmin in it who knode how to mannidge things and save men munny; and Majer Kyan Stinger also made a lot ov remarks that he afterwards rit out a good deal better thun he spoke um, and printed every last wun ov um in the Ciderville *Skorpion* along with the rest ov the perseedins.

The meetin house was middlin full ov peepul, and quite a sprinklin ov Prisbyterians was also there, and me and Squire Boxwood thawt they must a tuke in most anuff that nite to buy the karpud; but it turned out afterwards that they only kum out a dollar and a quarter ahed, and Jim Teesters boy claimed fifteen cents ov that fur passin round the bills. I cudent see into that fur a long spell; but finally, after kunsiderable figgerin, Matildy Ann got me to see how it kum. You see, Jess, it was this way: They had to pay them Grassburg peepul sumthin, besides givin um bak what it kost um to ride on the kars both ways, which peered to me to be a grate pitty; and besides this, they giv um their intertainment at the tavern. And then there was the drayin ov the pianner, both in takin in and takin out; and the hawlin ov a whole lot ov flowers frum the nussery, which I thawt at the time was a pack ov nonsense, fur they didnt do nuthin to draw nobody there. And besides all this, Namun Bruly had to be pade fur makin the platform bigger, and takin the boards

away agin; and then there was advertisin, both by hanbills and in the *Skorpion*, and the printin ov tickets, and a whole raft ov red and bloo sheet muslin to trim up the platform, and two or three telegraff dispatches to Grassburg, and the hirin ov a hoss and buggy fur Horrus Nibbs to go to Fogg's Rill to see if he cudent git a gal there to kum and sing; besides a lot ov uther noshuns fur this and fur that, which I kant jest call to mind, but which eat into munny like fire in a rail fence.

And then anuther thing that made things peter out so slim was, there was sech a lot ov dedheds. Nun ov the wimmin who belonged to the Sizzers Klub pade nuthin, nur the skule teeched, nur the members ov the town kounsil, nur the printers, nur nun ov the performers nur their friends; and so, Jess, after all, the biggest part ov the burden ez usual fell on us wheel hosses who went there without mistrustin that we cud a had free tickets jest as well as not, if we de only a had the gumshun to ask fur um. But thats alwas my luck. When a body is born naturally gineros, I tell you it kosts um a dredful site ov munny in a lifetime that there haint no manner ov yuse in partin with.

There was rite smart ov hard feelins made by the konsurt, and two or three ruther warm fusses grode out ov it; but then weve got so yust to sech things that we dont mind um mutch, and thaire alwas to be expected anyhow. The fokes that was there blamed them that wuzzent, and called um stingy fur not goin; and sum ov them that didnt go tuke on dredful bekoz sech doins was lowed in the church, and they sed what was things a kummin

to; but then, bless your life, Jess, we made a dollar and a quarter, and thats sumthin anyhow. It most makes me shiver tho, when I think how turribul klost we did kum to loozin sumthin.

Well, in spite ov the way their fust doins turned out, the wimmin dident think about gittin diskurridged, but went rite at it agin in middlin quick meeter to see if they cudent do better next time. The next thing they dun was to rent a store room in Kurnel Brasses block that happened to be empty, and while the Kounty Fare was in blast they turned it into a dinin room, and expected that they wud make a whole lot ov munny; but it did beat all how luck turned aginst um agin. Fur purty ny a week a duzzin wimmin stewed and fride, and biled and baked, and wurried, and burnt their fingers, and spilt greese on their dresses, and lost their tempers, and dammidged their good looks, and let their husbuns and yunguns liv on kold bites at home; and when they kum to set down and syfer, when the fare was over and they cud go home and rest, it most made sum ov um turn gray when the witherin truth was diskivered that they had kum out thirty two dollars and forty seven cents in dett, and nobody cud tell how, and they dont kno yit. All they kno is that when they kum to pay fur the groceries that had ben cooked and eat up, it took all the munny they had in the seegar box, and left um jest that mutch in dett.

Filander Pippes sez they haint needed no fridgeratur at his house, nur they haint used a pound ov ice sense; and Lem Hackelberry let drop a hint in the blacksmith shop the uther day that if we

didnt soon git that new karpud in the meetin house, he was dredful feared that he shud hav to soo fur a divorce. He sed he cud stand it to shoo the wildest kind ov mules that anybody cud bring him without kumplainin; but he sed there was a beginnin to be sum things that he cudnt stand, and what was more, he wudent mutch longer. He sed he got so stirred up sumtimes at the way things was a goin, that he had the biggest noshun in the wurd to go and buy that karpud and nail it down hisself, and he sed he bleaved it wud a ben a heep cheeper fur him if he had a dun it to begin with; but then Lem is rite smart kross ide, and you kin never tell frum his looks, when heze a tellin you anything, whether heze raaly in airnest or not, and jest like as not he was only a foolin. It wud be a turribul nice thing fur us tho, if he wud take a no-shun to buy that karpud. If he wud, it mite be that Pippes wud foller his example, and git the pull pit cheers; and then I dont see but what sum ov us cud go to meetin with sum satisfakshun fur a spell anyhow.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WAY THINGS HAPPEN IN CIDERVILLE.

Trouble in the Choir.

THAIVE ben a havin trubble in the quire at our meetin house agin, and its a beginnin to make Bruther Skybuster look as tho them rats in the pas-sunidge wudent let him sleep mutch at nite. As near as I kin find out, it all started frum Milly Dumps, the orgun player, a gittin it into her hed that she hadent ben treated rite. You see, a while back they was a goin to hav sum kind ov a doins in the church fur the children, and they wanted ever so mutch muzik fur it, but as Granmuther Dumps was down sick a bed, and Milly had to tend on her rite smart, it was jest about onpossible fur the gal to play the orgun fur um at all their practisin. So they hed to look around fur sumbody else, and it so happened that jest about that time a step sister of Namun Brulys wife, frum Muddy Water Springs, happened to kum a visitin to um, and Nancy Bruly wuzzent long in gittin it noised



around that her sister cud make an orgun git rite up and hump itself, and then ov korse she was the very wun they wanted, and it didnt take the kum-mitty but a little bit to perswade her to take rite holt and help to drill the little codgers so that they cud do what was wanted ov um at the doins.

Nobody dreemed ov this a kickin up any rum-pus, and all the foax said how lucky it was that Nancy Brulys sister shud hav kum along jest when she did, and how nice it was ov her to go rite at it with all her mite to help lurn them yunguns their peeces.

But there jest haint no way ov akountin fur the kontraryness ov sum wimmin. You kin now and then find out what it is that makes a mewl bock, if you watch him klose, but I dont bleeve that anybody this side ov Sollymun hisself has ever ben able to understand what in this world it is that makes wimmin foax so kontrary sumtimes when there haint no manner ov sense in their bein so.

The meetin house was crowded full of fokes, and the perseedins passed oph jest as nice as gittin the kash fur your country projuce. They tuck in more thun seven dollars in munny, and evrybody who was there peered to be raal glad ov it, except Jobe Branstetter, who had a new buggy whip stole, and Levi Chipps, whose gal giv him the mitten and went home with Hank Dukbill.

The children sung like a lot ov blackbirds in a peeche orchud; and I dont kno when Ive ben any where sense I quit goin to hoss races, that dun me more good thun that nites purseedins did. Sum how it made me feel ez tho I didnt owe a dollar

in the world, and while the yungsters was a singin, evrything peered ez kumfortable as ridin in a waggin with springs to it. I dont know when Ive ever seen Bruther Skybuster hav a kammer look out ov the ize, away frum the dinner table, thun he had that nite; and as fur Kurnel Soundin Brass and Bruther Tinklun Simbul, they cudent a peered any more peaceable lookin if they had a ben settin on the top seat ov a new band waggin.

The only seryus lookin person there that I notist was Majer Kyan Stinger, the editor ov the *Ciderville Skorpion*. He was there in a seat purty well forad, with a long pencil behind his ear, and a look on him ez desperit as tho he had ben fed on worm wood fur moren a week. He wud watch the purseedins as savidge ez a chained up dog fur five or ten minits, and then he wud grab his pencil and go to ritin ez energetic as mice in a rag bag.

Like all great men I spoze the Majer kant help but pheel the awfulness of the turribul responsibility that must jest about squeeze the life out ov him when heze a thinkin about things that must go into the *Skorpion*, even tho it shud make the sun purty ny stop shinin. If anybody has ever seen Majer Stinger smile or look plezzunt, they had to leeve these parts before they cud tell anybody else about it. The Majer has a way ov bunchin up his shoulders and drawin down his eyebrows when heze a doin hevvy thinkin, and ov sumhow or uther lookin kold anuff to spile eggs fur hatchin, while evrybody else around him is a swettin. But them ez knoze him best sez that his looks haint no sine ov whats a goin on inside ov him. It may be at the very

time when youde think frum his pheecheers that he cudent live moren an hour without bein rubbed with kamfire—I say it may be that rite then is the time when heze ez happy as a boy with jam on his bred. So it haint to be spozed that bekoz he was a lookin so dredful desperit that nite that the muzik wuzzent a goin to soot him, fur when the *Skorpion* kum out it was jes full ov good things about the singin, and the foax, and the children, and Bruther Skybuster, and heeps ov uthers that was called by name rite in kold print, not furgittin Nancy Brulys sister and her splendid orgun playin.

“It wuzzent offen,” the paper said, “that Ciderville peepul got sech a treet in syuntifick orgun playin ez the akomplisht lady frum Muddy Water Springs had giv us, and it was the yoonamimus hope ov the *Skorpion* that she wud offen visit our villdge and delite our citizens on numerus uther okashuns yit to kum.”

Ov korse that tickled the Brulys most to deth, and made Namun go rite down to the *Skorpion* offis and sine fur the paper, with a promise that he wud send in the pertaters that was to pay fur it ez soon as his boy dug um.

I dont bleeve Milly Dumps herself keered a kopper about it, and it haint likely that the gal wud a pestered her hed at all, if it hadent a ben fur Sister Gadder, who grabbed her bloo sun bonnit and cut out akross the kommuns fur Dumpzes house before the paper got dry what shede red the nooze in, and betwixt her and the Widder Tanner, who kum a chargin in a minit afterwards, with her face a burnin ez tho sumbody had jest ben askin her to marry, it

wuzzent but a little spell before they had the poor gals ize a snappin like meat a fryin; and then them two wimmin went it on the trot frum house to house ontill they had stirred up all the tattlers in that end ov town to go immejut to Dumpzes house and ag the poor gal, till they got the child mad anuff to bite; and then she flared up and sed that she wudent tutch that orgun agin to save the whole town as long ez her name was Dumps—not a bit she wudent. But Millys not a bad nachered gal, and most ov us think she wud a soon got over it and a gone rite on agin in a little while, a grindin out moozik fur us as free ez she ever did, if things had a stopped there; but you see what made it ez aggervatin as skinnin a kune before heze ded, was this: Sum ov the wimmin fokes thawt it wudent be nuthin more thun naberly to raze a little munny amungst um, and git sum kind ov a present to give to Brulys wifes sister, ez a kind ov a thanky gift fur what shede dun fur um; and so they went at it, and mannidged to raze two dollars and eighty nine cents, without gittin up a festival, with which they bawt a silver plated shuger bowl with her name cut on it, and had it giv to her in a speech by Bruther Tinklun Simbul, at the meetin house, jest before the Sunday skule let out.

This riled the whole Dumps family, and set all their tungs to buzzin like bees a swarmin. Milly cried till her bangs wudent kurl, and sed shede ben a playin their old orgun with all her mite fur ten yeers or more, and they hadent never giv her so mutch ez a teespune to stir her kawphy with fur anything shede dun; but an outsider cud kum in and rattle off a few toons, and then walk off with a brand

noo shuger bowl, besides havin speeches made to her, and peeces in the noozpaper, ez grand as tho she was a guvners wife. And then old Feeby Dumps, Millys muther, she got stirred up, and soon begun to say things as bitter ez a pill box; and ov korse it wuzzent long till Davy Dumps hissself was a talkin desperit spiteful too. He went to Bruther Stopps, who leads the quire, and told him if he didnt giv up the job immejut hede foreklose the morgidge he had aginst him, and turn him kleeer out ov house and home. But Stopps he braced rite up to him as savvidge as wun dog a barkin at another thru a palin fence, and told him hede die in the poor house before an old mummy like Dumps shud lay a finger on a toonin fork ov hizzen.

And then theres yung Horrus Nibbs, whoze ben a blowin the bugle horn in the meetin house fur a good while back. Heze Millys bo, and most evrybody has ben a thinkin fur sum time that the day was sot; but it dont look now ez tho the weddin wud ever kum off. You see, Feeby got so dredful desperit that she didnt peer to think no more about konsequences thun a possum in a hen house; and so she told Horrus that if he ever dared to blow another toon on that horn ov hizzen in the Ciderville meetin house he shudent never set a foot in a house ov hern no more, nur ever spark a gal ov hern agin. I spoze Feeby thawt that wud be about the same as pourin melted wax in his muzik horn; but I reckon she didnt kno that Horrus hissself was full ov Dutch blood too, and cud be jest as stubborn ez she was.

He didnt give her no back tawk, as I kin heer

ov, but he blowed his horn jest ez loud as ever that evenin; and that very nite, they say, he tuke Gib Mozebys gal home frum meetin, and heze ben a sparkin her ever sense ez airnest as tho he intended to marry before the summer was over. Ov korse that made Milly all the madder, and she went back into the quire jest fur spite, to show that she didnt keer a buttin fur him nohow; but at that three ov the best singers got their backs up about things thaide heerd Milly had sed about um, and so they went over and jined the Prisbyterians.

How things will finally simmer down, I dont kno; but I kin tell you wun thing, and that is that it will make Bruther Skybuster a good deal hoarser thun he is now before he gits things in that quire to runnin ez smooth as they wuz before Namun Brulys wifes sister kum to Ciderville. Its things like this that makes me bleeve more and more that there is a devil, who is evry bit ez mean as the preechers say he is.

Raisin^g Money to Fix the Church-yard Fence.

Our meetin house fence has got so ricketty frum hitchin hosses to it that its about reddy to fall down, and sum ov the wimmin foax has got ashamed ov it, and they hav begun to heckter us men most to deth about it. They wanted us to stir around, and raze munny anuff to bild a new wun; but we told um we was all so bizzy we jest cudent do nuthin about it, and tride to git shut ov um that way. But it wuzzent no yuse, bekoz wimmin foax out this way is most desperit kontrary when they

take a noshun, and they kep rite on a tawkin about it ez tho there wuzzent no purgatory, till finally sumbody sed the rite way to do was to take up a kollekshun in meetin to pay fur it. Most ov us spozed that wud end the matter; but you kant bild so very much ov a fence with ninety three sents, mostly in koppers, and two buttins. When the wimmen saw they had sech poor luck with the kollekshun, they kum a chargin after us men agin, and



wanted to kno what was to be dun about it. They sed that onless sumthin was dun mighty quick, it wudent be no time till evry wun ov them tume stones wud be a leanin over toards Rineharts. They wanted sum ov us men to take the matter in hands, and kall a meetin, and try to raze the munny; but me and

Squire Boxwood we jest told um we cudent do it, fur we was so desperit bizzy, and so did about all the uther men. At that the Widder Tanner she got her dander up, and sed she wud go at it, and raze that munny her own self, without any more shilly shallyin about it; and so she went at it im-mejut, and had a meetin at her house to study up sum kind ov a plan to raze what was yit lackin.

After praisin theirselves bekoz they was a tryin to do sumthin, and runnin down evrybody who wuzzent there, bekoz they didnt keer whether the

meetin house went to Hallyfax or not, they drunk sum tee, and appinted a kummitty to go around with subskripshun papers, and see what they cud do about it. The wimmin they put on the kum-mitty, besides the Widder Tanner herself, was Jooly Ann Dooley and Marthy Persimmon. They sed they was a goin to raze that munny if they had to skeer sumbody most to deth.

They wanted Missus Simbul to be on the kum-mitty, but she sed, La me, she cudent leave her boarders. Sister Brass had Lin Jessup at her house a sowin fur the boys, and so she cudent tend to it; nur nuther cud Missus Flaunt, bekoz she was a lookin fur kumpny frum Shakeville; nur nuther cud the Widder Skimp, fur she had sope to bile; nur nuther cud this wun nur that wun, and a whole passel ov uthers, fur this excuse and that; and so the best they cud do was to take Jooly Ann Dooley, Marthy Persimmon, and Missus Tanner.

The wimmin spent four days a goin over the naborhood to see the foax, and razed four dollars and twenty seven cents. Jooly Ann Dooly nocked one ov the hy heels frum her new shuze, and tore her best dress in klimin over a fence to git away frum a cow which was a chawin her kood and a slashin the flize with her tail rite there in frunt of Nat Foxes waggin shop. Jooly Ann sez she haint ben so skairt she cudent tell when. She got a dollar and nine cents on her paper, but wun ov the dimes had a hole in it. Its a downrite shame that sum ov these fellers that spiles munny haint ketched and put where the dogs wont bite um.

While the Widder Tanner was a kanvassin, sum-

body pizened her dog and stole a side ov bakun out of her smoke house. The dog wuzzent wuth so very mutch, but he was a good deal ov kumpny to her. She sez she liked him bekoz Tanner used to hate him so. She cried ez tho shede lost wun ov her children when she found out he was ded. I mean the dog. She brought in eighty two cents and a pound ov nails, and made Rube Hazlits wife cryin mad by tellin Fletch Harkers gal that she kunsidered her stingy bekoz she wudent sine nuthin on her paper toards the fence.

Marthy Persimmon dun better thun both ov the uther wimmin put together, and had less bad luck. She had a good bit ov advantage to begin with tho, bekoz she was the fust to see Kurnel Soundin Brass. The Kurnel inquired whether the names was to be printed in the Ciderville *Skorpion* or not, and when Marthy told him they was, he grabbed up a broad pen and rit his name in blue ink right at the top ov her paper fur a dollar, and sed it was alwaz a pleshure to him to do good, speshly when he didnt resk nuthin by doin it. It wuzzent but a little while after that till she met Bruther Tinklun Simbul and got another dollar out ov him. The other thirty six cents kum along jest as she cud get um, frum a good many different peepul.

Marthy sez she never saw so many poor foax in all her born days as she found while she was a tryin to raze that munny. It jest about made her hart bleed; and frum the way the most ov um tawkt, she thinks its hy time the kummishuners was a thinkin about bildin on sum more wings to the poor house. Nate Frink, who alwuz has the best hogs in Mus-

keetur Kounty, and who haint had a sine ov kollery amungst um fur nine yeers or more, told her he was jes too klose run to buy his own terbacker, when she boned him fur a quarter toards that fence. To be sure, Nate dont belong to meetin, but his wife duz, and heze got a granmother berried in our graveyard. I dont bleeve heze ez hard run as he lets on to be, bekoz I saw him and his whole family at the sirkus not long ago, and he was a buyin ginger bred and peanuts as reckless ez I wud eat walnuts.

And then there was Missus Pink, who alwuz keeps her kumplekshun powdered up ez fine as the varnish on a fiddle, and who wears more jewelry thun a gal who is ingaged to be married; she sed she bleeved in the new fence with all her hart, but it mortified her most to deth to own up that she was jest too poor to do a solitary thing toards it. Sheepskin Jarvis sed he wud paint the gate, if sumbody else wud furnish the stuff, but he cudent spare a cent ov reddy munny to save him. Marthy thought sure shede git a dollar or so frum the hy steppin yung feller who smokes ten cent seegars, and cuts out jackets fur a livin in Bob Flannels tailor shop, but he told her that he jest cudent help a bit; and Marthy sez thats the way it was with evry last wun ov um. Evrybody was so hard run that it was a mystry where the next meal was a kummin frum. She sez she never had no idee that munny cud be so dredful skeerce anywhere outside ov a jail as it peers to be in Ciderville. Marthy sez if sheze ever sent out agin to raze munny amungst us fur meetin purpusiz, sheze a goin to take a shotgun instid ov a subskripshun paper.

The Plan that Brought the Money.

Ime glad to say that by havin an ise kreem supper weve got kleeer out ov the woods kunsernin the fence, and hav sumthin to spare besides. We kleeered more thun forty dollars, and made the Prisbyterians all bilin mad over it. I tell you what it is, Jess, there haint nuthin that will put life into a Church



like gittin up an ise kreem supper. It beats a pertracted meetin all holler. Before we had that supper most ov our foax was as kam and onkunserned about meetin matters ez anything you ever seen outside ov a graveyard, but now the most ov um is reddy to fite fur our own denominashun, and the meekest ov um kin say things that skorches like gun powder.

You see, Missus Tanner was at the hed ov the whole mix. She sed shede started out to raze munny anuff to snap that fence up, and she was a goin to do it, too, if it tuke all summer; but sum how there was a drag about evrything she undertook, ontill finally she struck on the idee ov havin che ise kreem supper, and no sooner did she men-shun that thun evrybody sed it will be jest the thing. The Baxter gals was all in fur it, evry wun ov um. They said there hadent ben anything to go

to sense the pie party at Zed Woolpickers, and they was glad to hav a chanse to git out before foax and show peepul that Lin Jessup hadent ben a sowin at their house most a munth fur nuthin. Evry woman who had anything new to wear was ov the same opinyun, and them what didnt hav nuthin wanted to go to see what the uthers had, and find fault with it. I tell you, Jess, there jest haint anything outside ov mule nacher that kin kum up to sum wimmin fur doin things thats onexpected.

I didnt keer so mutch about goin myself, but the old wumun and the gals wudent hear to nuthin else, bekoz they sed it was our downrite Krischun duty to be there. We never agin wud hav sech a chance to do so mutch good and git our munny back.

The supper was in the Ciderville town hall, which was fixt up with ever green brush and sech like, and evry thing looked ez brisk as a drug store at Krismus time. The room was about ez full as it cud stick with peepul, and evry wun ov um had their Sunday go to meetin klose on, and I haint seen so mutch smilin sense Bill Rakestraw was a runnin fur kunstable. I swan to goodness, Jess, I bleeve it wud almost make foax rush into our meetin houses and jine Church, if peepul cud only be allowed to' look ez chirked up and cheerful in meetin ez the foax did that nite at the ise kreem supper.

Its a downrite pitty that its kunsidered sech a desperit bad thing fur peepul to look ez tho they had good helth in our meetin houses. This thing ov havin to keep yer face drawed down and yer

blud held back ez tho you had your feet in ise water all the time youre in meetin, is a mighty onkumfortable thing to hav to do, and its a shame that us perfessers has to do it, or run the resk ov havin foax tawk about us, and say that we didnt hav religyun rite.

Kurnel Soundin Brass was there, a lookin ez tho he was a goin to live forever, a tawkin to evrybody ez if they belonged to him, and a jokin Bruther Skybuster about his preechin ontill the poor man looked ez tho he was a havin needles run into him. Bruther Tinklun Simbul was also there, with his goldhedded kane in his hand, dressed up fit to kill, with a bunch ov red flowers pinned on his brest. His shirt buzum was ez slick as a noo meat dish, and his jacket didnt hav a rinkel in it. His hed peered to be drawd up about three notches hyer thun usual, and ez he walked around the hall talkin nonsense rite and left, it most peered to me that I cud feel the bildin trimble. His wife was over in the korner they was a yuzin fur a kitchen, a wearin a bloo Muther Hubbard, and a makin the kophy bile. How monsus proud that woman must be ov her husbun! Evry time she looked at him you cud purty ny see her grit her teeth with joy. If I had a four yeer old kolt that cud carry his hed ez nice and look ez well all the time ez Bruther Simbul duz, I wudent begrudge ten dollars, tho I bleeve I shud expect him to do ruther more work.

The Widder Tanner was at the hite ov her glory, fur sheze never hed sech anuther chance to boss anybody sense Tanner dide ez she had that nite. She kep evrybody in hot water, and made all the uther

wimmin who was on the kummittty with her fly around like the mischuff. She didnt peer to do mutch herself, but I tell you she made evrybody else tow the scratch.

While the supper was a bein got reddy, the foax bunched around in little crowds, and dun their best to see who cud outdo the rest in tawkin about wun anuther. I never had no idee that there was so many peepul in Ciderville that ort to be in jail ez I found out there was that nite. I yoost to think that there was now and then a person in our Church that you cudent find a flaw in; but sense Ive ben to that ise kreem supper Ime not so sure about it. Marthy Persimmon told Semanthy she cudent understand how so many foax got there who told her they was a sufferin fur bred and terbacker, the uther day, when she was after um with a subskripshun paper.

Milly Dumps, the organ player, got so mad her hair kum down, bekoz sumbody got a yung woman who was there frum Pipetown to set down at the pianer and sing a peese that made evrybody hold their breth fur fear the gal wud bust a blud vessel. And jest bekoz Mister Skinner, the hed skule teecher, had Levi Bruslers little boy stand up and speek a peese, evrybody else who had boys with



any smartness in um, got so strung up about it that more thun a duzzen ov um sed they wudent never pay anuther cent ov tackzes if Skinner got the skule agin.

Anuther thing that sum ov the foax dident jest like was the part tuke by Jooly Ann Dooley. Jooly Anns great gift is whisslun. She kin pucker up her lips, and whissel ekal to a hired hand on a frosty mornin. They had her git up on the stage, and whissel a peese that sounded like birds a warblin. All the yung fellers klapt their hands, and kep her a goin it till she got kleeer out ov breth, and that made all the uther gals drop their lips, and look ez sour ez a yungun that needs whalin. Sally Frane tost up her hed, and sed if she cudent do nuthin but be brassy before foax, shede be ashamed ov herself. Sumbody went and told Jooly Ann about it rite away, and she sed sumthin back to Sally that made her and her muther both put on their bonnets and go home ez strate as they cud wawk.

Jo Gaskets gal spilt a glass ov lemonade all over Missus Chippzes bloo silk dress; and sum uther yung womun stumbled and fell over Nate Frinkzes feet, and slashed a cup ov hot koffy right square into the shinin shirt buzzum ov Nickademus Watkins, who had jest put on his eye glasses to help hissself to anuther biskit. Dock Piltesters baby got choked on a chicken bone; and sumbody stole Sister Pelsers gold hedded umberell, which she had brawt with her jest to show foax that she had wun. Bob Wheezy and Sam Perdoo both wanted to go home with the same gal, and the upshot ov it was

they had a fite about it, and she went home with anuther feller. They say Bob had his new black kote split kleeer up to the koller, while Sams noze the next mornin looked ez tho sumthin dredful had happened to it. Granmuther Hipes ketched sech a cold sheze not ben able to set her foot outside ov the house yit; and Sol Gimberlins wife worked so hard that she was tuke down sick that same nite with a burnin fever, and sheze not ben able to strike a lick sense. It will be ruther tuff on Sol if he has to hire a gal, and go to payin out munny fur dokter stuff. Bugglers got into Sam Pippzes house while the foax was out, and stole a bloo overkote and six or 8 pounds ov side meat. Sam was wun ov the fellers who deklared he cud-ent give a dime toards the fence to save him. Sumbody changed the lines on John Mussels hoss, and made him run away. Besides this, there was rite smart ov uther mischuff kicked up, out ov which theres a goin to kum more thun wun law suit, and sum foax that has ben middlin good frends wont speak to wun anuther agin fur wun while; but so long ez our meetin house is forty dollars ahed, without nobody havin to giv away nuthin, whats the yuse ov loosin sleep over it.

A Wedding at the Parsonage.

I had to go to Ciderville yisterday, and be in town all day, and as it was a most too cold to git along without warm vittles, I kunkluded that it wud be a good time fur me to be soshable with our preecher; and so, along toards dinner time, I went

down to the passunidge to have a chat with him about matters and things on the sirkut. I didnt smell nuthin a cookin when I fust got there; but it wuzzent but a few minnits afterwards before I seen their boy a skootin up town across lots with a market basket, and so the preecher and his wife didnt hav to do so very mutch pressin to git me to stay to dinner.

While me and Bruther Skybuster was a settin



in the frunt room a waitin fur dinner to be reddy, there was a nock at the door, and when the preecher opened it, there stood a feller and his gal on the porch who had kum to the passunidge to git married. The preecher sot um cheers, and then called in his wife to intertain um

while he put on his specks and lookt over the lysunce. They was a dredful shy lookin kuppel, and the preechers wife didnt peer to hav any luck in gittin um to say mutch. She found out tho that they lived about three mild frum Muddy Water, and that the gals daddy owned sum land. By that time Bruther Skybuster peered to be satisfied that the dockyments was all rite, so he put his specks bak in his pocket and got up and married um, and it didnt take him a bit over five minits to do it nuther. When he got thru and the gal had got her

shawl on agin, and her ears tied up, and was reddy to start, the feller hisself kind a hemmed and hawed fur a minnit, and then he asked the preecher what the dammidge was. He told him he hadent never made no set prices fur sech work, but ginerally lowed the fokes to giv him what they wanted to. I spozed mebbe the feller wud giv him a quarter; but Ile deklare, Jess, he giv him a whole dollar, and he didnt ask fur no change bak. If that haint makin big wages fur five minnits work Ide like to kno what you call it. It kind a seems to me that it ort to be fetched in aginst the preecher at the next quarterly meetin and kounted ez quarteridge.

When the weddiners went away, Bruther Skybuster sed if I wud step out to the stable with him he wud show me what he got fur marryin the last kupple, and ov korse I was glad to do it. He led me out to a pen that he had bilt alongside ov the stable, and when I lookt into it there was a pig that looked as tho it cud outrun the kars and eat pickles out ov a bottle. I swan to goodness, Jess, it was so slim that it put me in mind ov a sunfish, and the way it cud squeel fur swill was anuff to make a body think that outside ov its hide and bones it must be all lungs in good runnin order. The preecher said that he had married a widderer who sed he was short up fur munny, but he had a few pigs left, and he wud bring him wun, and about a week afterwards he fetched it, and there it was. He sed he bleeved he wud almost be willin to marry anybody else fur nuthin who wud kum and take it away agin. I dont think I ever seen anything in my life that looked more ez tho it had ben donated thun that

pig did. It may be that the preecher kin git it fat anuff to stick by next Krismus, but I hav my dowts about it. Fur a lean meat breed ov hogs I dont bleeve you cud find its ekal. The preecher asked my advice about keepin the pig or hirin sumbody to drive it out to the woods and shute it, and I advised him to keep it. The reason I dun so was that Ive got sum sour korn left that I want to take up to him on quarteridge. That pig will eat evry last nubbin ov it, kob and all, and never kno the difference, and mebbe in the korse of time he kin be got fat anuff to use his side meat fur saw greazers.

CHAPTER VII.

LAMPS, PITCHERS, AND TRUMPETS.

Brother Skybuster.

THERES sum things that Bruther Skybuster kin do ez well ez the next wun; but theres wun thing he kant do, and that is to talk about razin munny without throwin a damper over the meetin. Sumhow or uther he dont peer to hav the gift ov gittin his pay, and keepin the church in stove wood and kole oil, without makin a good many ov our very best peepul feel tutchy; and thats sumthin that our preechers ort alwuz to be dredful keerful about. Its a hard matter to git peepul to kum to Chûrch if they hav an idee that thaire a goin to be pestered to deth about sech things ez that as soon as they git into the meetin house. Its a great pitty that more ov our preechers kant git along like us farmers duz, by razin their own truck and dicker, and never sayin nuthin about kash to 'nobody. If thade do



that there wudent be so many ov our benches with dust on um evry Sunday. The Possle Pawl roled up his sleeves and worked all the week to airn his own livin, and I dont see why our preechers shudent foller his egzample.

As I say, Bruther Skybuster is a good man—a raal good man—and I bleeve he alwus tries to do as near rite ez sirkumstances will low him; but he hez his weak pints, like all the rest ov us. If hede only knode haff as much about mannidgin munny matters as he ort to, hede a had all the sirkut detts pade off long before this time. But as it is, it jest keeps us stewards on the strain all the time, a doin things that the preecher ort to tend to; and it takes the hardest kind ov tuggin to barely raze jest what weere obleeged to hav, even tho the hat is passed at evry meetin, speshully sense thave got to makin britches buttins that look so mutch like munny.

But its not only on that akount that our foax is a gittin put out with Bruther Skybuster. Theres uther reasons why we shud hav a change in our preecher. As I sed in the fust place, weeve alwuz liked him, and weeve sot about as hy by him ez we cud by anybody who cudent liv any cheeper thun he duz; but theres also a gittin to be a good many kumplaints that his voice is a failin him, and that he kant begin to holler like he yoost to when he fust kum on the sirkut. Old Grandaddy Nucks sez its a gittin so that whenever he happens to furgit his eer trumpit, and leev it at home, he kant git no sense out ov moren about haff ov the sarmint; and sum ov the uthers sez its awl they kin do to keep

their ize open on a hot day, bekoz he dont stir um up like he yoost to; and in these times you kno, Jess, theres so mutch kompetishun all around that foax has got to be up to snuff in religyun as well as in uther things, or the fust thing you kno yore lams is a gamblin away toards sumbody elses pastur; and when you kum to square up akounts at the last quarterly meetin, you hav eether got to go down in your own trowzus pocket monsus deep, or else do a turrible site ov outside beggin and festival konnivin, if the preecher is to leev without loozin sum ov his pay.

But in his reglar paster work, Bruther Skybuster is not to be sneezed at by the best ov um. He kin take keer ov his own hoss, and do ez mutch wadin around in a muddy barn yard, without spilin his kloze outrite, ez any preecher I ever seen who didnt own a pare ov ingun rubber leggins. Fur a lean man he kin also sleep with ez little kiver over him on a kold nite, without freezin to deth or krawlin out to bild a fire, ez anybody I ever knode. It duz beat all how tuff he is. You kin put him into a bed that neether a man nur a boy nur a dog has slep in fur two yeers or more, and it wont hardly faze him. It may make him bark fur a day or two, but thats about all it will ever amount to. If it stiffens his jints any with roomatiz, ez it wud me or you, nobody ever finds it out, kawz he dont never say nuthin about it.

Bruther Skybuster is also a prime hand at visitin, and gits around to see us nearly ez often as the moon fulls; and whenever he kums he tells us how monsus tite the times is, and what a desperit hard

time heze a havin to make both ends meet on the wages weere a payin him; and this ov korse makes us most amazin glad to see him, coz you kno what a satisfakshun it is to you to fall in with sumbody whoze a havin a tuffer time thun you are. Another good thing about Bruther Skybuster is that he never takes you onexpected. You alwas kno when to look fur him. At our house its alwuz when Semanthy is a house kleenin, or Ime a butcherin or a thrashin, or a doin sumthin else that makes me most turribul bizzy. At sech times ez that Ime alwus on the lookout to see his old white hoss a klymin the hill, and Ime never disappointed. He never fales to git along about the time I git a fresh hog in the barl. I spoze its bekawz he knoze that we need prayin fur more at sech times thun at any uther; and thats why he never furgits to call us into the house jest then to read a chapter, and ask the children questions about how many Jooze kum out ov Egup.

Brother Gunflint.

Bruther Gunflint kum along the uther day, on his way up to Ciderville to take the kars to go to Konpherence, and the old womun and the gals perswaded him to stop and stay all nite with us. Fur the last two yeers heze ben on the Gusekneck Sirkut, which jines ourn on the west; and frum what weeve heerd, oph and on, it peers that heze stirred up things over there jest wunderful, and has tuke in more jiners thun you cud shake a stick at. We had ruther a nice time a visitin with him, after we

found out that he hadent kum to try to raze munny to bild a church or nuthin; bekoz our fokes alwas did like Bruther Gunflint. As a ginal thing preechers is ruther good kumpny, bekoz they nearly all ov um kno sum things that you dont, and as thaire all tawkers by trade, it haint a bit ov bother fur them to keep you awake, when thaire not in the pull pit; and if it wuzzent fur this thing ov their alwas a wantin munny fur sumthin, I dont kno as it wud be sech

a turribul aggervatin thing to hav um around wunst in awhile. Theres a heap ov difference in preechers about the house tho, I kin tell you that. Sum ov um will take more waitin on than a boy with a sore foot, and they will keep you on



the trot jest about as konstant; but theres uthers agin that haint no more bother around the house thun a jug ov mulassiz under the kitchen table, and its most as mutch satisfackshun to hav sech men as that kum to seë you as it is to kno that youve got a lot ov winter appuls in the celler.

Theres sum preechers that yure wife wud be mortified most to deth if they shud happen to drop in and ketch you eatin dinner without havin on a red table cloth and yure kumpny kups and sassers; but theres uthers that you wudent keer a pasnip if

they shud kum along and find you a settin down to a meal ov nuthin else but mush and milk.

Sum ov um wont move a foot toards takin keer ov their own hosses, while uthers will do it and never say beans about it. Ive knode sum who wud set in the house, and read and rock all day, and let their krittters stand to the hitchin post and starve, when the men fokes was all away, ruther thun do a hands turn toards puttin um in the barn and feedin um; but I want to tell you that preechin frum men like that never peered to me as tho it kum out ov the Bible, fur it has alwas struck me that a man who wudent treat his hoss rite wuzzent exzackly the feller to tell me how I ort to behave myself to git to hevvin.

Theres sum preechers that you feel as tho youve got to give up evrything else while thaire there, and let yure work go all to skuthers, and set down in the settin room to intertain um; but then agin I kin pint out uthers who will tell you to go rite on with your plowin, and never mind about them. Thave got a sarmint to git up anyhow, and wud jest as soon take keer ov theirselves as to hav you stay and tawk to um. Sum ov um will mortify you most to deth by askin you queschuns before the yunguns about things in the Bible that you dont kno a thing about; while uthers, without peerin to do it, will giv you more infermashun durin a little visit thun you cud lurn frum a book wuth a quarter.

Sum preechers will make theirselves at home in a way thats bekumin and plezzunt and nice; while uthers will go into the pantry, and sniff around fur

pye, or go a pokin down cellar on the hunt fur buttermilk, in a way thats anuff to make a womun feel as tho shede like to git after um with a broom stick. I tell you, Jess, a preecher without gumpshun never finds no kushin on his cheer at our house. I cud tell you ov wun who yoost to kum and find fault with the pikchers, and say that the karpet was Dutchy, and the wall paper wud look better in a bar room, and so on, in a way that made more thun wun family kut down like smoke in their quarteridge; and then he wud growl and skold and say things that kut like pizen in the pull pit.

But Bruther Gunflint wuzzent that kind ov a preecher when he was on our sirkut. He was a man that evrybody alwas liked. Before youde seen him ten minnits you felt as tho youde knode him a year or so. He never made no extra work fur nobody, and if they didnt happen to hav three or four different kinds ov pye in the house when he kum, the fokes wuzzent never a bit flustered. He alwas made up his own bed and kurried his own hoss; and didnt git up in the middle ov the nite, like sum preechers Ive knode, and wake up evrybody on the place to kno if we cudent giv him a little more kiver or anuther piller. He tuke things as he found um, and made the best ov um, and drunk his kawphy without sugar; and in these times I tell you that means sumthin. He wuzzent alwas a tawkin about what a turribul site evrybody thawt ov him on his last sirkut, and how fytin mad they all was, both in the Church and out, when the news went back that he had ben appinted to go to anuther place. He was a good man kleeer thru, and evrybody knode it, and

we wuzzent the only wuns who alwas felt as tho there was less danger ov the house a bein struck by lytnin when he was with us.

Children wuzzent a bit afeerd ov him, and instid ov runnin to the barn to hide when they saw him a kummin, they wud run out to meet him, and I bleeve in my soul evry yungun on the sirkut was ez glad to see him a kummin ez a womun is to see a peddler drive up. It alwas peered to me that he had a way of gittin a powerful strong holt on the old fokes by the way he made friends with the yungsters and little chaps. I dont kno how it kums, but Ive alwas notist that if the children take a strong noshun to a preecher, purty ny evrybody else duz; and so on that akount I bleeve, if I had to preech fur a livin, Ide do my best to keep on the good side ov the little fokes.

Brother Sunshine.

We hav jest ben a gittin shut ov a dett on our meetin house in Ciderville that has pestered sum ov us most to deth. It has ben there ever sense the church was bilt; but thank goodness its gone at last, and sum ov us kin now go to meetin without feelin a good deal as tho we was a goin to be shot at.

Last Sunday we had a new preecher in the pull pit, who tuke hold ov that dett and shuke the life out ov it quicker thun Samson killed the lion. It wuz Bruther Sunshine, who is the paster over at Briteburg. Bruther Skybuster had told us the week before that he had got him to promise to kum over and giv us a sarmint, and as nun ov us suspishened

that munny wud be menshuned, and as our fokes is alwas krazy to hear a noo preecher, the meetin house was krowded.

Bruther Sunshine is a big man, with a round face that haint got no rinkles in it. Heze as good nachered as an apple pie, and whenever he looks at you, you feel as tho you wanted to shake hands with him immejut. Heze a turribul plezzunt man, and no mistake about it; and besides that, heze an onkommun powerful preecher, or he cudent never a dun what he dun in Ciderville. Before he sed a word I felt as tho I wud like to jine meetin over agin. There was sumthin in his ize that made you feel as tho it cudent be rong to look happy in a meetin house, and his voice tuke holt ov you like watchin children play.



I dont mind what his text was, but it was sumthin about belonging to meetin, and before he had ben a tawkin two minnits I knode we was a goin to hav a wonderful good sarmint. He told us more about meetin houses, in jest a little short spell, than I ever heerd before in all my life. Sumhow he made it look a powerful site ez tho they was a mity good thing to have in a naburhood, and that there wuzzent nuthin that cud be started that wud pay better in the long run thun a meetin house. He was a monsus good hand at fixin things out so plain

that you cud seed um jest the same ez tho you was a lookin at a paintin ; and he showed us how things wud be if we didnt hav no churches in the kounty, and he dun it so plain that it made Unkel Peeleg turn up his kote collar and shiver. And then sum-how, I dont kno how he dun it, he peered to pick up the kongergashun in his arms and karry um, a goin hyer and then hyer and hyer, ontill Isum Klover got to klappin his hands, he was so happy ; and the Widder Good cudent hold in no longer, but jumped square up and shouted "Glory !" and then, before anybody cud tell where they was, that preecher went strate at it and tuke up a kollekshun to pay that church dett off ; and if youle bleeve me, Jess, I swan to goodness if he didnt do it.

Before we hardly knode what was up, Kurnel Soundin Brass sprung to his feet, and sed he wud giv a hundred dollars, and Isum Klover sed hede giv anuther, and Sister Brass she sed shede giv anuther ; and I hope Ile never drink tee agin if that didnt stir up Semanthy so that she got up, and akshully told um rite there, with hundreds ov peepul to hear her, that her and me wud giv anuther, at which the preecher klapt his hands and sed, "Bless the wimmin, let um tawk in meetin if they want to. They kin all speak." And no sooner had he said it thun Kaptun Pushers wife, she stuck up her hand, and when Bruther Skybuster got to her, down went her name fur a hundred.

"Thats right," sed the preecher, a smilin more thun ever, "let the wimmin tawk ; they kin beat the men all to pieces. Let um keep on tawkin. Nobody cud do better, and I kno the Possle Pawl

wud say so, too, if he was here this mornin. If I was a man in this crowd I wud be ashamed ov myself. What is it, sister? We all want to hear you—speak rite out,” sed he, to Namun Brulys wife, who had just stood up to say that she wud giv fifty dollars. And then Dock Piltester hopped up, and sed that he knode if he didnt soon giv a hundred dollars his wife wud be bound to, and that sot sum more ov the men to goin, and sooner thun I cud tell how it was dun, they had razed a thousand dollars!

A thousand dollars, Jess! Jest think ov it! A thousand dollars, raised in a Ciderville meetin quicker than you cud cut a kake, and not a dish of ise kreem nur a solitary oyster in site nowhere! If anybody had a told me that I wud liv long anuff to see sech a thing ez that, I wudent a bleeved it—never. But when that preecher got um started to givin, it peered as tho they wudent never stop ontill evrybody had had a chance to try it; and even Unkel Peeleg got so reckless that he sprung up and hollered out ten dollars, and then broke fur the town pump on the ded run, with Bruther Gimps, who had also giv sumthin, rite after him. I shudent wunder but what mebbe Ide a ben fule anuff to giv sumthin myself, if it hadent a ben fur that turribul extravagance ov Semanthy. Nuthin never happened to me sense the time I broke thru the ice on Jobe Slaters pond that kum as ny freezin my blud ez that did, fur I tell you weelee hav to liv mity savin fur wun while ontill we kin ketch up agin. Ime turrible glad, tho, that that dredful dett has ben pade at last, fur now we kin go to meetin without runnin sech great resks.

Nathan Faithful.

How is it that sum preachers dont never undertake to tell anybody how to git to hevvin outside the pull pit, while sum uthers peer to be most alwas a tryin to do it? And speakin ov this puts me in mind ov our persidin elder, Bruther Nathun Faithful. I never in all my born days seen sech a man



fur jest doin nuthin else but bein religyus as he is. He sumhow peers to hav a noshun in his hed that he must be at it evry minnit ov his life, a tryin to show sumbody how to git to hevvin; and I dont keer how mutch ov a stranger you are to him, before youve seen the man five minnits, hele ask you

pint blank which way youre a travelin, and hele do it in sech a way too, that you kant git out ov anserin him. And they say it dont make no difference how fokes takes it, he never gits diskurridged, but keeps rite on.

Sometimes he gits a holt ov peepul who flare up, and git ez mad as a woman who has jest missed the nail and hit her finger, but he dont mind it. He will pint out the law to um as luvin as a muther, and try to show um that the best thing they kin do is to make an immejut start fur the glory world.

Its alwas ben his rule, he sez, ever sense heze

belonged to meetin, to try to say sumthin evry day ov his life to sumbody who cudent see no sense in the Bible, and its downrite wunderful how many fokes heze got to jine the Church who didnt hav wun bit ov a noshun toards it ontill he got a holt ov um.

There was old Rastus Muffin, over at Pinhuke, fur wun, as krusty a man ez ever clubbed the pigs out ov a garden. I dont bleeve there ever was sech a feller. Why, Jess, he wud ez soon kuss a preecher as to hist an umbereller. I dont spoze anybody in this world ever had the kurridge to say a solitary word to him about the rēsk ov bein a sinner ontill Bruther Nathun Faithful kum along, and told him to his face jest what wud bekum ov him if he didnt change his ways and behave hisself. Ov korse he immejutly got as mad ez a black-snake with its hed under a fence rail, and jerkin off his kote he vummed and vowed in words that was dredful that he was a goin to thrash the preecher, and they say the way he jumped around and shuck his phist was a kawshun; but law bless you, he didnt kno Bruther Faithful, if he had any idee that any sech thing ez that cud skeer him, fur the preecher didnt even trimble. He dun all he cud to try to kam the man, and when he saw it was a waist ov breth, he pūrseeded on his way and left him; but he didnt furgit him, and when he got home he sot down and rote him a long luvvin letter, in which he dun his best to pint out to the old feller a heap ov things that he hadent never dreamed ov.

Well, what do you spoze kum ov it? Ile tell you. It wuzzent a week afore Rastus got to feelin

so bad that his wife sed it dident peer as tho he was the same man. He tuke to readin the Bible most evry day, but fur anything she cud see it dident seem as tho he was a gittin a grain ov kumphert out ov it; and he kep on that way until Bruther Faithful went back there agin to hold anuther quarterly meetin, when lo and behold you, to the bewunderment ov evrybody, Rastus stopped his plowin on Saturday to go to meetin, and the very minnit the elder opened the doors ov the Church what did he do but git up as quick ez tho he was a tryin to win a bet and go forad and jine, and then ez the fokes kum around him to shake hands, he begun a weepin as tho his hart was broke. That was ten or a duzzin yeers ago, and they say a better member thun he has turned out to be wuzzent never tuke into the Pinhuke meetin house.

And thats the way it is with Bruther Faithful wherever he goze. He dont have to wear a long tailed kote ner a white kervat to let fokes kno that heze religyus, as is the kase with more thun wun preecher that I hav knode; and what Ide like to hav you tell me is, what under the sun is it that makes sech a monsus difference in fokes? How duz it kum to be so eazy fur the elder to tawk about religyun, miles and miles away frum a pull pit, while theres uther preechers who hav preshus little to say fur the Lord while thaire in wun.

If its a preechers bizniss to start fokes toards hevvin, how duz it kum that theres lots ov um who dont never try to do it? Weeve had preecher after preecher kum to our house and stay all day,

more times thun I kin tell you, without ever givin a solitary hint by their tawk that it was resky bizniss to be wicked. If they bleeve what they say at funerils, how duz it kum that there haint more ov um who dont live up to it? Thats what I wish sumbody wud tell me. Why here, a kuppel ov yeers ago, Bruther Faithful hitched up his hoss wun mornin, and he druv kleeer over to Notchburg, which is twenty mild away, a payin his own tole both ways, and what do you spoze he dun it fur? Why it was fur nuthin else under the sun only to tell a man there that if he ever expected to meet his muther in hevvin, akordin to the promise he made to her on her dyin bed, he had better go rite at it that very day and make the start, and when the man kum to find out that the preecher had ben in sech turribul airnest about him as all that, they say he was so worked up about it that he cudent wait fur Sunday to kum to jine the Church, but was tuke in on probashum that very day before sundown. If preechers evrywhere was as stirrin ez that, it peers to me that sum ov um wudent hav to do so much preechin to empty benches in their meetin houses.

Brother Ketchum.

Last Sunday, Bruther Skybuster swopt works with the preecher over on the Boot Heel Sirkut, and as the word had ben giv out the week before that we was a goin to hav a fresh man in the pull pit, the way the fokes turned out was a little more thun

amazin, when you kum to bear in mind how good the weather was to eether fish or go a visitin. Jim Teester sez they begun to kum while he was a ringin the fust bell, and kept a pourin in middlin brisk ontill after the openin hymn was sung.

Sum ov the wimmin, I dont kno jest who, had kluttered up the pull pit with a passle ov flowers and plants, that I lurnt afterwards had kost forty



cents ov meetin munny fur bringin um there and takin um away agin. It peers to me, Jess, that there ort to be sumthin in the Bible most middlin strong against sech things, if a body only knode where to find it. Puttin flowers in a meetin house always did peer to me to be most ez foolish as wearin socks in the summer time, even if it didnt

kost anything; but Ive found out that after you jine Church you hav to put up with a turribul site ov things that you dont want to.

Its Semanthys noshun that the flowers was put there to rouse the preecher up and make him stir hisself. She sez its dredful polite to hav flowers in site when theres strangers about, and it means more thun throwin up your hat to make hosses run. Well, it may be that way with sum fokes, but it wuzzent never my turn to go into kunnipshuns over any sech nonsense, and Ide ruther see pertaturs

in blossom thun to look at a rosebush any time. I dont bleeve, tho, that Ive ever seen more peepul in our meetin house in all my life, outside ov a weddin or a funeril, or a free doins ov sum kind, and yit the kullekshun wuzzent no great shakes after all. Theres a gittin to be too many peepul who dont take nuthin but koppers and buttins to meetin with um.

The preecher was a big man with long hair and no whiskers, and knode about ez well how to keep fokes awake as the next wun. He had a way ov holdin his hed that giv him a turribul knowin look; but that wuzzent nuthin aginst him, fur I like to see a man look smart, no matter who he is, onless heze a feller that Ime liable to trade hosses with. The preecher was ez full ov vim as a barl ov hard cider, and it was wunderful the way fokes lissened to him. I didnt see but wun man look sleepy durin the whole sarmint, and he was a feller who cudent hear good.

The preecher didnt peer to kno very many big words, and so I spoze he hadent ben to kollidge, fur I dont bleeve he sed a thing that I cudent understand as well as I know how to eat popkorn. He wuzzent a bit like Doktor Hedpelter that I heerd preech over at Grassburg wunst. He yused sum words that was long anuff fur lytnin rods, and when he got thru I felt as tho I didnt kno anuff to snuff a kandle. Its a great kumphert to a body tho, sum-times—tho wunst in a long while will do fur me—to kno that thaire a lissenin to a man who knoze anuff to figger up how fur the stars is apart whenever he wants to.

The name ov the preecher was Bruther Mozus

Ketchum, and I tell you, Jess, he tried his beetinest to do it. A more pinte preecher I dont think I ever lissened to thun he was. It seemed to me that he cud handle Skripcher soze to make it shute rite thru you ez well as an Ingun cud a boanarro. I dont think I ever was mutch gladder to hear the last hym sung in meetin thun I was that mornin, fur I must own up, that Bruther Ketchum sed a good manny things that made me feel as tho the bench I sot on hadent ben bilt jest rite.

I like preechin that peels uther fokes as well as the next wun, but I never do injoy lissenin to a sarmint that a preecher gits up express to show me my shortkummins; and I bleeve Ile tell Bruther Skybuster if he ever swops works with that man agin, that I will shut down on payin him so mutch quarteridge. When I want to be abused to my face I kin git it dun without goin to meetin and payin a feller fur doin it, and Ile tell our preecher so. What gits me, tho, is how that Boot Heel preecher kum by his infurmashun. He never was at Cider-ville before in all his life, and it stumps me to make out who furnished him his pints. I dont bleeve theres a soul on the Boot Heel Sirkut that knoze me, except a miller by the name ov Gib Yadkins, who yoost to be at Foggs Rill, and who, the last I heerd was a runnin a mill sumwhere not fur frum Bean Blossum. I had a morgidge on that fellers mill wunst, and he never peered to like me afterwards. I shudent wunder if he didnt find out sumhow that Bruther Ketchum was a kummin down this way, and go to him with a lot ov stuff

that he made up about me, jest to hav me made the laffin stock ov the whole meetin house.

Gib alwas was a spiteful feller, and I wudent put it a bit a past him. I got my grindin dun at his mill fur a kunsiderable spell, but I finally got joobus that he was a toalin me too hevvy and quit. Ime sorry now that I ever had anything to do with him, fur I kno as well ez I kno how to kount up interest munny, that when that preecher goze back and tells him how he raked me, hele haw-haw at a dredful rate, and theres no tellin how manny lize he wont set a goin about me.

I wont try to tell you nuthin about the preechers sarmint, bekaws I know it wud only stir you up and make you feel aggervated at the way I was picked out and shot into; but I will only say that if any sech thing shud ever happen as that Bruther Ketchum shud be sent to foller Bruther Skybuster on the Ciderville Sirkut, Ile take out my letter as sure as my name is Ganderfoot, and I wont go ny the meetin house as long ez he has anything to do with it. Ile let him kno that he kant bullyrag me without luzin kunsiderable stove wood and pervishuns by doin it.

After meetin we went home with Bruther Kalup Chiller fur dinner, and had a turribul plezzunt visit. At the dinner table purty mutch all ov our tawk was about the preecher. Kalup sed he didnt bleeve moren about haff what he had sed, and ov korse I cud agree with him, tho the wimmin all stuck up fur him, and lowed that he was a wonderful preecher. Kalups wife sed she liked him koz he spoke out free and kleeer, and peered to kno what he was a

tawkin about, and wuzzent afeerd to say so. I wanted to tell her my suspishuns about that Bean Blossum miller, but she was sech a snappy sort ov a person herself that I thawt mebbe I hadent better do it. Us men tho, about all tuke sides against the preecher, and sed if we cudent do no better thun he dun wede go into sum uther bizness; and if his ears didnt feel ruther warm about that time, I tell you it wuzzent our fault. We had it bak and forth middlin lively, and frum Bruther Ketchum we soon got to discussin Bruther Skybuster, a tellin what he ort to do, and a showin what he hadent dun; and I cudent help but notiss how Kalups children sot there with their eyes and ears wide open with wonder, and purty soon wun ov his boys sed: "Pap, if the preecher haint no more akount thun you fokes sez he is, why is it that yure so ded set all the time on makin us children go to meetin?" About all Kalup cud say to this was to tell the boy that when he got growed up he wud understand sech things a heap better thun he cud now. I dont kno as I ever thawt ov it before, but it is dredful hard work sum-times to git yunguns to undestand how it kums that a preecher who haint wuth beans to preech to old fokes, shud be jest the best hand in the wurd to lurn children how to git to hevvin.

Brother Cimberjint.

We ort to hav as many agin members as weeve got in our meetin house, and if sum preechers was on this sirkut wede hav um, too. If we only had

a preecher like Bruther Limberjint, who yust to be on the Gourd Handle Sirkut, jest east ov us, I dont bleeve there wud be any needcessity ov its kostin me a whole dollar a munth all the yeer round fur my preechin. Why, Jess, that man knode as well how to fill up a Church as I do how to part my hair without havin to look in a lookin glass. It wuzzent no trick at all fur him to fill a meetin house chuck full ov jiners, and he wud git fokes that was able to pay han-sum, too, he wud. In fact, I was told by peepul who knode all about it, that there wuzzent anybody within miles and miles ov any ov his appintments, who was wuth havin, that he didnt hunnysuckel into bekummin members, and the way he dun it mostly was by not bein so overly pertickler as sum preechers is.



He wuzzent mutch akount fur preechin and prayin, or even singin, but he was smart anuff to kno that the way to git fokes to foller you was to make it easy fur um, and so that was the way he worked it. He never had a word to say in his sarmints that cud hurt anybodys feelins, and he was mity keerful even when he red the Skripchers to pick out places that didnt peer to mean anything that was aginst any kind ov mischuff or meanness.

It didnt make no difference what fokes wanted to hav in the Church, short ov reglar heel and toe dancin, they cud go rite ahed and hav it, and he wud be on hand to help um. He wud a little ruther that his members wudent fuss and fite, I spoze, but he never sed a word that was rite square out against it, and if any ov um did git to pullin hair middlin viggerus sumtimes, he never run the resk ov loozin um by lettin on that he knode anything about it in meetin.

Bruther Limberjint bleeved in keepin evrything that sounded like the Ten Commandments ez fur out ov site as possible; and I never heerd ov anybody that had to make any change in their habits by jinin meetin while he was on the sirkut. He bleeved in havin evrything run as smuthe as mulassiz in hot wether, and he was smart anuff to kno that the way to git um that way was to let peepul hav their own way about their behavin, and not say nuthin in his preechin that wud stir up the bulldog in um, and make um wish they hadent a jined meetin. Thats the way he mannidged, and it worked so slick that it never bothered him nun to git whole droves ov peepul to jine the Church. Whenever he tuke a noshun that there was any man who ort to belong to meetin, he jest went rite to him and made a bargun and got him to jine. It peered as tho he never had no trubble to git any ov um, no matter how tuff they was. It didnt take him no time at all to show any ov um that it was easier to git along in meetin than it was outside ov it. The main thing was to keep out ov jail and pay their quarteridge, and giv the preacher their names soze he cud count um.

Ov korse if they had infirmatiz, and things they cudent help, that was all rite, fur fokes was born that way, and nobody was to be blamed fur what they wuzzent responsible fur. Belongin to meetin wud show that they bleaved in tryin to be haff white, and it wud make their frens feel better if anything was to happen to um, so Bruther Limberjint wud tell um; and by this and uther winnin ways he never had no trubbul about fillin up his meetin house and keepin it full. He wuzzent bothered nun with backsliders. He was also sech a good funeral preecher that it giv him a strong holt evrywhere. It didnt peer to make no difference with him what kind ov a feller a man had ben, as soon as the breth was out ov him there wuzzent any danger ov sayin anything too good about him, and it was jest the easiest thing in the world fur him to giv anybody a front seat in hevvin who had ben a Church member hisself or had any frens who belonged to meetin. Outside ov munny I dont think I ever knode ov anything as kumfortin as the way he cud tawk under sirkumstances where uther preechers wud a ben sure to make you feel bad. He never had no trubbul about kullektun his quarteridge and gittin his wages, and when he went to Konpherence he had figgers to show big anuff to make all the uther preechers ize pop.

It alwas peered to be too bad, tho, that sum feller who wuzzent wuth his salt was jest about sure to be appinted to foller him, and he wudent be there three munts before hede preech the Church empty agin by sayin things that wud make evrybody feel bad. Its a grate pity that Bruther Sky-

buster haint got as mutch gumshun in meetin matters as Bruther Limberjint had. Heze good at sum things, but he haint wuth shucks fur makin a bargain with a man and gittin him to jine meetin; and altho heze a middlin smuthe preecher in the ginral run, he will now and then say things that makes a feller jump as tho hede ben shot at. Weere all so kloose presst all the time by the Prisbyterians that it makes us hump ourselves, but if we had a preecher like Bruther Limberjint we cud beat um so bad they wudent kno theirselves. It seems too bad that weeve got a preecher who is so poor about gittin jiners as Bruther Skybuster is. We need a revival jest the wust way, but I dont spoze wele ever git it while our preecher is so pokey. If hede a had his meetins a good spell ago, as all ov us wanted him to do, mebbe hede a dun sumthin; but as things is now, I dont expect nuthin, bekaws all the rest ov the leadin members is as bizzy as I am.

The New Preacher.

Ciderville has jest had a stirrin up that has kawsed the wimmin fokes to wear out more shoo lether in gittin around to jabber with wun anuther, thun most anything thats happened sense the Widder Snyders milliner store was burned down. You see our new preecher got onto the ground and preeched his fust sarmint last Sunday, and peepul that haint ben to meetin before sense old Pankake Sturgin dide, was there ez wide awake as a weezil in a hen house, to see the preecher and hear him

say his say. Bruther Javlun is a ruther slim feller with black ize, and has a dredful hungry look; but that may have ben kawsed by sickness, fur Ive heerd that over there around Brushtown, where he kum frum, alwas did beat all kreashun fur ager.

If I hadent a knode that the man was a preecher, I dont kno but what mebbe Ide a liked his looks fust rate; but what kind a turned me against him a little was that heze got

a mustash. A preecher with a mustash, Jess! Only think ov it! Haint it skandlus? I never spozed Ide liv to see a preecher a standin in a pull pit in broad day lite with hair on his upper lip like that, and that, too, without the sine ov a blush on him, a tawkin to a whole meetin house full



ov peepul as onkunserned as a hired hand a restin. Sumhow, it made me most wish we hadent ben in sech a swett to git shut ov Bruther Skybuster, fur I kin remember the time when a man who didnt wear side whiskers wudent never a ben trusted to marry peepul in Muskeeter Kounty.

Purty ny evrybody else, tho, is tuke up with Bruther Javlun most powerful, and they say thaile miss it if it dont turn out that hele make us a dredful nice preecher. Still, Im afeerd Ile be trubbled like smoke evry time I go to meetin about his mus-

tash, and Ive got the biggest noshun to go and hav a tawk with him about it. If he wud only fix hisself up to look a good deal more like a preecher than he duz, I bleeve I cud git rite smart more kumphert out ov his sarmints. He peers to be a dredful sosheble feller, tho, and when he was thru preechin he got rite out amungst the fokes and went to shakin hands rite and left.

He sed in his sarmint that he had alwas ben a plain speakin man, and in his preechin he shud ginerally try to say things that wud do the peepul good. He wudent preech at the smuthe spots on anybody, but if he bleeved they had the small pox he shud try to tell um so. He wud call a spade a spade, and not undertake to tawk about it in sech a way that peepul wud think he meant a hoe.

Bruther Javlun dont make mutch noize in his preechin, and peers to be wunderful quiet after our bein so yust to Bruther Skybuster; but mebbe hele warm up and git more in airnist after he gits better acquainted with us. Sum preechers is a little bashful at fust, and mebbe its that way with him. Weele see what weele see, tho, after he gits his hand in.

Most evrybody that I spoke to on the way out ov the meetin house ruther thawt they wud like him, and the only fault I heerd anybody find with his preechin wus old Grandaddy Nucks, who was a growlin like sixty bekaws he sed he hadent heerd a solitary word of the sarmint thru his ear trumpet. Ever sense Jim Teesters boy fell over it and kracked it the old man has had rite smart ov trubble with it.

PART SECOND.

SAYINGS, SERMONS, AND LECTURES.

ALSO AN

Account of the Author's Conversion.

CHAPTER I.

FIGS AND THISTLES.

THE man who prays right, always pays right.

A spider never finds any honey in a flower.

The bite of a little snake will kill as quick as that of a big one.

The devil can make almost anything he wants out of a loafer.

People who have to make a long reach to pick up the cross find it very heavy.

If there is any sight on this earth the devil likes to look at, it is a drunkard's home.

Men who never smile will some day find out that they have a good deal to answer for.

A well-rounded Christian character is a cannon-ball that is always ready for heavenly warfare.

The man who thinks he knows the most about training up children is the man who has none.

Money will overcome the world, but it takes religion, pure and undefiled, to overcome the devil.

Some men would have better wives if they didn't growl so much whenever they give them a little money.

If the devil couldn't make unconverted people believe the road to heaven was all up hill, he would n't have so many followers.

Truth is what God says about everything.

The devil never feels lonesome in the company of a stingy man.

If your life is not a blessing to others, it is not a blessing to you.

If you want to be a thinker, ask yourself a good many questions.

The best time to keep away from some people is when you are in trouble.

The man who puts heart into everything he does is watched by angels when he works.

One of the hardest things the devil ever undertook to do was to put a long face on a happy Christian.

The kind of sanctification that does not sweeten people and keep them that way is not the right kind.

A man who can pay his debts and won't do it, would steal if he was sure he wouldn't be caught at it.

A revival is badly needed in the Church where the leading members take the back seats in prayer-meeting.

People who really love Christ are never much troubled about how, when, and where they ought to tell it.

It is an awful thing for a man to find out the truth about himself, but a glorious thing to find out the truth about God.

If the devil couldn't make a good many religious people look gloomy, he would have to manage some how or other to sell more whisky.

It only costs a few dollars to send a man to heaven on a tombstone.

If you want to be able to speak kind words, cultivate kind feelings.

Give the past to God, and determine to make good use of the future.

Before you can find rest in the service of God you must be a worker.

If the preacher is convicted by his own sermon he is on the right track.

No person who does not pray in secret is fit to be a Sunday-school teacher.

The most attractive thing on earth is the spirit of Christ in a human body.

If you are poor, it is probably because God can not trust you with money.

Murder is always committed in the heart before it is committed with a gun.

A man is very poor if he has nothing that will do more for him than money.

People who delight in pure thoughts are always within arm's-length of heaven.

The man who is small and mean in money matters with his wife, always has a hard time in convincing her that he is religious.

It must make the devil nudge himself in the ribs if he ever goes into a big graveyard to read the inscriptions on the tombstones.

It will help you to be charitable toward other people if you will remember that every other man has just as much mule in him as you have.

God can not hide your sin until you bring it to him.

A flower will smell good no matter where you put it.

The Good Shepherd never drives his sheep to pasture.

To keep any man out of your heart will keep God out.

The man who goes to school to his mistakes has a good teacher.

Trying to be religious two hours a week is one of the hardest ways to get to heaven anybody ever undertook.

People who worry, forget that God is still great enough to keep an eye on everything, from an atom to a planet.

People who are not quite right themselves always feel better when they can find something wrong with other people.

Infidelity may publish car-loads of books in trying to tear the Bible to pieces, but it can not explain a godly life.

The love of money is a sin, not because money is money, but because it is a power which may be used against God.

People who are always too poor to take a good newspaper, never have any trouble in raising money to go to a circus.

The most disappointed people in the judgment will be those who could have had more religion, but thought they had enough to do them.

The things which do the most to make us happy do not cost money.

If you can't be rich, you can become better off by being contented.

No man can pray the Lord's Prayer with his hands in his pockets.

The man who has nothing worth fighting for never gains many victories.

A stingy man is all the time telling the world that his god is just like him.

The devil can't kindle a fire hot enough to burn a man when God is with him.

Everybody can do a good deal for the Lord who is willing to get down low enough.

You can generally tell about how much religion a man has by the kind of company he keeps.

Some men are honest because they have never had a good chance to steal anything.

No man can keep hold of the hand of God while he steps on the rights of his brother.

It is a dreadful trying thing on some professors of religion to get a chance to make money easy.

The higher a man gets up in spiritual life, the lower he is willing to go down to help others.

When you find God's plow at work in your soul, you may know that he intends to raise a crop there.

People who really love Jesus don't put down twenty-five cents a year to help carry the gospel to the heathen. A man with one leg and no eyes, whose heart is on fire for God, would find a way to do more than that.

A fact never apologizes to anybody.

If some people would pay better, they could pray better.

The man who is disloyal to his convictions will not be loyal to anything.

A place that is comfortable for a saint is more than red-hot for a sinner.

Every time a man says "No" to God, the devil gets a stronger grip upon him.

The more competition you have, the more you need God for a business partner.

Trying to find out who Cain's wife was has led many a man straight to the devil.

When a man finds out that he needs knowledge, he has his hand on the gate leading to it.

Instead of "putting off the old man," some people try to dress him up and make him look nice.

Remember that God is interested in what you take out whenever you put your hand in your pocket.

Whenever you ask God for anything that is good for you, he has already given it to you, by promise.

The devil don't care how much religion a man gets if he can only make him believe he has enough to get along with.

What wonderful things would happen in the Church if so many people who ought to bring oxen to the altar would n't try to get off with sparrows and pigeons!

The fault-finder does a good deal of work for the devil for nothing.

The shadow of a trouble is always blacker than the trouble itself.

One of the biggest cowards is the man who is afraid to do right.

The hardest man to please is the one who never knows what he wants.

When a man does business for God, there is no danger of bankruptcy.

Sanctification in business is as badly needed as it is in prayer-meeting.

Every dollar you give in the name of Christ draws interest in heaven.

The devil hates man because of the godlike possibilities he can see in him.

Marrying for money is a very common way of shaking hands with the devil.

If you want to be strong in trial, don't forget to pray when you are prosperous.

When God sends a man anywhere, the devil does his best to keep him from going.

We are never made mad by the truth when we find out it is God who gives it to us.

If every member of the Church were a cheerful giver, the devil would soon begin to pull down his flag.

Whenever God finds a man who has the courage to starve to death in his service, the devil is badly frightened.

The man who has no God owns nothing.

The devil always knows where to find a loafer.

If you would be pure in mind, be pure in habit.

Every little act is the child of a great principle.

A fact is something that neither man nor devil can kill.

The man who wears blue glasses never finds the sunshine.

When God tells man to rejoice, the devil can't stop him.

If you are in the wrong place, your right place is empty.

The man who worries helps the angel of death to get to him.

It is n't half so hard to please God as it is some of our neighbors.

To have to look at himself is the hottest fire a bad man can get into.

The devil is always ready to shake hands with the man who does not pray in secret.

A cheerful disposition will do more for you than a pedigree running back to the *Mayflower*.

No man can do one thing through a desire to please God without wanting to do another.

The man who works may be tempted by one devil, but the loafer is tempted by a dozen.

There is always plenty of room for the man whose life is governed by a fixed principle.

If some people would read their Bibles more, they would n't be so anxious to make more money.

Through all his trials and struggles, Paul carried a smile that he took with him to heaven.

When a man is driven to desperation, he generally holds the reins and loosens the brake himself.

People who are always talking about charity beginning at home never do anything to help her start.

The man who runs his boots down at the heel has a hard time keeping his toes square with the world.

The bad man throws mud at the good man because he has to do it to keep from looking at himself.

If you do not believe that it is indeed more blessed to give than to receive, it is because you have never tried it.

The devil never feels that he has lost the day when he can manage to get a couple of God's people mad at each other.

If angels can understand what whisky-sellers are doing, it must puzzle them to understand why God holds back the judgment-day.

The joy of the Lord is the strength of the righteous. If you want to win great battles for God, that's the kind of ammunition you must carry.

The man who keeps his joy in spite of all the devil can do to take it away from him, will be one of the star-crowned heroes that angels will point out in heaven.

The most dangerous deception is self-deception.

A merciless man can not worship a merciful God.

Love your enemy, but don't buy his boy a drum.

The man who overcomes himself disappoints the devil.

The man in the wrong is the one who won't forgive.

Salvation is not for the unwilling, but for "who-soever will."

The sin you look at will soon make you pick it up and carry it.

A stingy man would have to stand on his head to see heaven..

No man who gives as much as he ought to do ever growls about it.

A man has as much right to kill himself as he has to live a useless life.

The sun shines so brightly that his black spots are not noticed. Do you?

Tell your troubles to God, and you will soon have joys to tell to everybody.

Temperance means the right use of right things. There is no right use of wrong things.

The Bible says, "When thou doest thine alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth;" but the Church is full of people who would never give away a dollar if they were not pretty sure the whole town would know it.

A good man is one of God's thoughts in motion.

The first real step toward heaven is to decide to start now.

You have n't got much religion if you don't praise the Lord only when you feel like it.

If you are really converted, you will want to be a better man to-day than you were yesterday.

People who try to serve the Lord for gain would rather work for the devil at the same wages.

If you go to Church without meeting God, you will be sure to take the devil home with you.

There is probably a commotion in heaven whenever the angels are told that God has found a cheerful giver.

The worst hell the worldling could find would be to get within sight of the throne of God, and have to stay there.

There are people in the Church who wear long faces because they are afraid they would n't be considered religious if they did n't.

No one will ever be kept out of heaven for not doing enough, but multitudes will fail to enter in because they do not love enough.

A penny that is the fruit of sacrifice makes more noise in heaven, as it drops into the Lord's box, than a thousand dollars that a nabob throws in without an effort.

There are men who at the table will tell the Lord they are thankful for the things before them, but as soon as they say "Amen" will begin to storm about the cooking.

No man is rich who is not contented.

When we can not justify ourselves we despise ourselves.

God has no use for lazy people, either on earth or in heaven.

The most expensive thing that can happen to you is to be wrong.

As long as a man believes God hates him he will be a God hater.

Every dollar in the world that does not belong to God has blood on it.

The father who does not train up his boys properly helps the bar-keeper.

The way to heaven is an avenue of light. Every Christian is a lamp-post.

Whenever we look at the dust we ought to remember where God found us.

The man who will tell the truth when he goes a-fishing will do to trust almost anywhere.

The hardest thing God ever tried to do was to save us sinners. Christ had to die to do it.

The most dangerous saloon-keeper is the one who most successfully conceals the fact that the devil is his partner.

Some people can trust God as long as they have plenty of money; but when the bank breaks, their religion all goes with it.

The man who never does anything in the Church unless he can have his own way about it, is a man the devil is not much afraid of.

A man without faults has no friends.

Our heaviest burdens are those we borrow.

Genius may be swift, but perseverance has the surest feet.

If we never had any trials we would never have any triumphs.

Men gather the coals together, but God makes the fire burn.

Trials do not weaken us. They only show us that we are weak.

Educating the boy is the parent's endeavor to get him to choose right.

God has written his name everywhere, but man is slow in learning to read it.

If all men were perfect, there would n't be anything that we could do for God.

Don't look at the Bible through your creed, but look at your creed through the Bible.

If you want to find out how much clear dog there is in a man, find out how he treats his wife.

We never do anything well until we realize our own worth, and nothing extra good until we forget it.

Some people are indeed fearfully and wonderfully made. When they feel the gladdest they look the bluest.

A moderate drinker is worth a thousand times more to the devil for destructive purposes than an out-and-out drunkard.

Hope is the half-brother of happiness.

The first glass has the most poison in it.

A wife who is worth having is worth praising.

The best way to use up a snake for good is to kill the end that has the head on.

One of the hardest castles for the devil to overcome is the home where love is king.

No man ever finds rest, and lies down in the green pastures of content, until he finds God.

The devil don't care two straws for your profession. All he is afraid of is your practice.

The man who worships a golden calf can never know the delight of owning a cow that gives milk.

People who boast that they never did any harm, are generally those who have n't done much good.

Shadows have no claws, they carry no swords, and fire no guns; but they frighten many people to death.

The man who loves God with all his heart will be strong enough to keep all the other commandments.

God does not ask where you have been, or what you have been doing. He wants to know where you are now.

Many people are electric lights in class-meeting and tallow dips at home. If there is to be any difference in the shining, it ought to be just the other way.

When the devil is looking for a comfortable place in which to take a nap, he always finds it in a proud and worldly heart.

God went as far down as it was possible to go to find man, and he will lift him as high as it is possible for Omnipotence to place him.

CHAPTER II.

“HAVE ME EXCUSED.

Many invited to a Great Supper, and urged to go,
but all sent Regrets.

IN the fourteenth chapter of Luke, beginning at the sixteenth verse, we have, in the words of Jesus, a most graphic description of a scene more than eighteen hundred years old, which is as home-like and true to the present as anything we might read from this morning's paper. It shows us that human nature is the same to-day that it was then. With all our progress in the arts and sciences, we haven't grown an inch in moral character. We put on our best clothes, and look at ourselves in the glass, and think we are very handsome people—a thousand times more shapely and better looking than our grandfathers were; but the real truth of the matter is that, in a moral sense, we are just as pigeon-toed, and bow-legged, and hump-backed, and knock-kneed as they were. We have the same kind of hearts as they had, and we don't need anything but the same incentives and opportunities to become just as wicked. The only reason why some of us behave better than they did is because we have to. Some of us are so banked in by restraining influences that we never find out how much bad blood

we have in our veins. But it's there, and if it ever gets a chance it will make us do the same things our forefathers did when they slept in tents, and wanted to go back to Egypt after onions and garlic. The water we boil our potatoes in is the same kind of stuff that destroyed Johnstown; and it would be just as merciless toward us if it had the same chance. There was only one Judas who sold Christ for silver; but there are thousands of others who would like to, and who would do it, too, if they could only find a safe market.

In the lesson referred to we are told of a certain man who made a great supper, and invited many; and when the preparations were all completed, he sent his servant to those who had been invited, to urge them to come at once, for all things were ready. But to the amazement of the servant, who, no doubt, had seen the supper, and knew what a feast they were rejecting—every one of them made excuses, and not one of them would go. One said he had been buying land, and had to go and look at it; another had bought five yoke of oxen, and wanted to try them; and another had married a wife, and was anxious to get to housekeeping. The servant returned, and told his master what had been said to him, whereupon the master became highly indignant at receiving such treatment. But the supper had been prepared, and should not be wasted; so the servant was told to go quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

The servant obeyed to the letter, and soon stood before his master again to tell him that it had been

done, and yet there was room. This time the master ordered him to go into the highways and hedges, and compel every one he could find to come in, that the house might be filled. He was to bring everybody he could get his hands on, no matter who they were, or how they were dressed, the only exception being those who had rejected the first invitation. The declaration was that not one of these should taste of the supper. The man who wanted to look at his land could keep on looking at it; and the one who wanted to try his oxen could have all eternity to do it in; and the man who was in such urgent haste to get to housekeeping would have nothing to do but joint stove-pipe and tack down carpet forever.

Find a man anywhere on the face of this globe to-day, and ask him to do something he doesn't want to do, and instead of speaking up like a man, and saying in plain English that he doesn't want to do it and doesn't intend to do it, he will go right at it and make a frivolous excuse, just as these people did in Palestine.

The feast spoken of by our Savior was designed to be typical of the feast of salvation; and the excuses offered show the various pretexts people will urge for not immediately accepting the urgent invitations which the Holy Ghost brings to their souls. The people who made the excuses had expected to go to the feast. They had been invited some time previously, and had not declined. They were honored in receiving the invitation, because it came to them from a great man. It was a great supper, and it takes a great man to give a great feast; and the

greater the man the greater the honor conferred upon the invited guests. They knew that they would have a good time, and fully intended to be there; but the things of daily life took their attention, and they kept putting off making their preparations, until at last, to their amazement, the great day of the feast had come, and they were not ready; and when the messenger so unexpectedly stood before them and said, "Come, for all things are ready!" it wouldn't do to let the great man know the real state of the case, for when he came to make another feast their names would be dropped from his list, and they would not get an invitation. The people most in danger of going to hell are those who expect to go to heaven, but who put off making an immediate start. Every one of God's invitations is urgent. Nowhere in the Bible can you find a single offer of salvation upon any other terms than that it be taken at the present moment. But these men in our lesson were like the people all about us to-day—not quite ready; and so they all began with one consent to make excuse. Adam made an excuse in the Garden of Eden, and every guilty man from that day to this has done the same thing whenever he found himself in a close corner. We are all cowards, and must have something to hide behind.

Let us consider first the character of the people who were making these excuses. They were not the poor, and the lame, and the halt, and the blind. If anybody could have had a justifiable reason for not going, surely these could; but not one of them made an excuse. The poor man didn't say: "I am so ragged it would be torture for me to appear at the table of

such a grand man as this lord is; and so on that account I want to be excused. If I only had some good clothes to wear I should be very glad to go; but as it is, I can't think of it, and I am sure your master would not expect me to come, looking as I do."

The lame man might have said: "I would like to go first rate, but my lame leg is hurting me so badly that I couldn't stand the walk. If it wasn't so far, I might manage to get there, perhaps; but it is such a great way that I would be fairly used up before I could get half-way there. On that account tell your good master to have me excused. Tell him I am grateful for the honor, but I am not able to make the trip."

The blind man might have said: "I should be delighted to go, but my dog is sick to-day, and I have no one to lead me, and I never could find the way there without help; and so you will have to give the master my regrets, and tell him I am sorely disappointed in not being able to go."

The first man overtaken in the highway might have said: "My wife is at the point of death, and I am going after the doctor. If it was n't for that, I would start for the feast at this moment; but you know when there is sickness in the family, a man's first duty is at home. Kindly explain this to your master, and I am sure he will excuse me."

The man in the hedge might have said: "Go to the feast! Indeed, I should like to; but you see I've been burning up here with a fever for the last two days, and I'm not able to crawl. Explain my case to your kind master, and I'm sure he will excuse me."

But it was not such people as these who made excuses. The people from whom least is expected are nearly always the ones who do the most. Nobody expected the widow with the two mites to do anything, and yet she did more than all the others. No one knew the name of the lad who had the five loaves and two fishes, and yet he furnished the material to feed the multitude. Nobody expected anything from the shepherd-boy who had never seen a battle, but he downed the giant at the first throw. The people to whom the servant went were the very ones from whom something was expected. They were not irresponsible strangers, like those in the highways and hedges, but were the friends and neighbors of the man who made the feast. They were the leading people of the community—people of influence and understanding—and they were the people for whom the feast had been especially prepared; the very elect, we might say. Their prosperity was the cause of their not going. The poor, and the lame, and the blind got to the feast, but these prosperous people didn't. It is a dangerous thing to be rich.

The servant went first to the greatest and most influential man among them. He was not a hireling, who had to go and come at the beck and call of another, but he was a flourishing land-owner, who was prospering and adding to his possessions. He was n't a renter, who was hampered and tied down because he had to be accountable to another, and could n't branch out in his own lines and prove the superiority of his own methods in farming above all others; but he was his own lord and master, and

could employ his time and talents as he saw fit. He stood high among his neighbors, and was looked up to by them as a man of energy and importance. Perhaps he was quoted far and near as a shrewd and keen-sighted farmer, whose example it would always be safe to pattern after.

There are just such men as that in every community—men who are continually making unwritten laws, which everybody else has to follow. When this man made a decision about anything, no matter much what it was—from the breed of lambs that should be taken up to the Passover at Jerusalem, to the number of beans planted in a hill, or the width of the straps on a pack-saddle—he decided for the entire procession that was walking behind him. When he washed his sheep, a good many other men also drove their own flocks down to the stream; and when he began to break up his ground, and get ready to sow barley, the sight of his teams in the field started all the other plows in that region. His example pulled a good many people out of bed before daylight in the morning, and when he blew out the light in the evening, it was time for everybody else to be in bed.

This man had just been buying another piece of ground. We don't know what he paid an acre for it, nor how long he had been trying to get it, nor how much there was of it. Perhaps he had been after that ground for years. It may have joined him on the south, or the west, or the east, and was just what he wanted to give him an outlet, or to square out his own place. I never saw a farmer in my life who had land enough. There's always another

little patch somewhere, or a field, or a wood-lot, that he must have. He'll be miserable until he gets it, and when he does get it, it will only give him a bigger appetite for something bigger and better. I used to be a farmer myself, and that's the way it worked on me. My neighbor owned a field that he wouldn't sell, which I needed to make my own place square, and it was a regular Naboth's vineyard to me. Whenever I looked at it I lost possession of all the land I owned; and sometimes I used to almost wish that the owner would die, so that the land would come into market and I could buy it. It's a dreadful thing to want something in that way that you can't get. Perhaps the man in our lesson had been situated a good deal like that. He had wanted that field more than he ever wanted anything else in his life, and the more he couldn't get it, the more he wanted it. The first thing he thought of when he awoke in the morning was that field, and it was the last thing in his thoughts at night.

For years he has been working and slaving himself and everybody else on the place half to death, trying to save money enough to buy that field. He has pieced the day at both ends; done the work of two or three men himself, and made the children dread the sound of his voice before daylight in the morning. It may be that he has worked a wife or two to death in struggling and striving to get a clear deed for that field. Nothing in the shape of luxuries ever goes into the house, and sometimes things that are needful are not overly plentiful. If any of the girls want a little money to buy a few

ribbons, they are told that they must wait until the field is paid for; and whenever the boys want anything that boys can live without having, they are put off with a promise that if they will work like nailers until the field is paid for, they may have it.

That field was a goal that must be won, no matter what the sacrifice, and to get it the farmer jeopardized even his own soul. His oldest boy may have run away and joined a caravan going down to Damascus, where he got into wild ways that broke his mother's heart; and to escape the tyranny of home which the struggle for the field put upon her, his most amiable daughter may have married a man she did n't love, simply to get away from her father's house, and thus have brought upon herself a life of sorrow and untold misery.

But the old man has got the field at last, and now that he has got it, he will have to work harder than ever till he gets in a crop. Walk up to him as he sits there on the fence, Sunday morning, scheming and planning how he is going to make that field help to buy another one, and ask him to come to Church and hear something about the imperishable wealth that moth and rust can not corrupt, and what will he say? "I pray thee have me excused." And if you happen to get him to Church, he will take that field along with him, and will plow it, and harrow it, and roll it, and plant it, and cut the crop, and sell it, and spend the money before the preacher gets half through the sermon.

Can't you see with half an eye that the man is a thousand times worse off after he has got the field than he was before. How many men are among

the damned to-day because they, like this man, got their hearts set upon a piece of ground, or some other worldly possession, that they were determined to possess in spite of all obstacles, and for which they put forth every energy and made every sacrifice, forgetting that He who came from the courts of God, to tell us where and how to find the true riches, had said: "Seek first [not second, nor third, nor fourth, nor last, but seek first the] kingdom of God and his righteousness."

They got the land at last; but when they did get it, it did not turn out to be the blessing they had expected it to be, but a curse. In a soul sense it was a millstone about their necks, and drew them down to the bottom of the sea of damnation. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul at last? Are any of us farming land to-day that has been bought at that price? If so, may God help us to see what miserable fools we have been, before it is forever too late to make a better investment!

The next man said he had bought a yoke of oxen, and had to hitch up and see how they would pull, and on that account he could n't come. I have an idea that this man was toeing right along in the tracks of the man who had bought the field. Perhaps he had bought some of those very oxen from him, or all of them it may be. He may have been a son-in-law or a nephew to that very man. At all events he was closely associated with him in some way that gave the landed farmer a good deal of influence over him, and when the enthusiastic servant came galloping up on his mule to tell him to get on

his Sunday clothes right away and come over to the feast with the most urgent dispatch, perhaps he leaned on his ox-goad, and pointing with his thumb over his shoulder toward the house of the old miser, who was even then sitting on the fence, and looking at his piece of ground, he said :

“ Have you been over there ? ”

“ Yes ; just left there,” says the servant, taking off his turban to wipe his dripping brow.

“ And what about him ? Is he going ? ”

“ No ; says he would like to, but he can't. A pressing business matter compels him to be absent, and so he sends his regrets.”

“ He does, eh ? ”

“ Yes ; says he can 't go. Impossible.”

“ Well, now, that 's a little curious. Mighty curious it is ; for that 's just my case exactly. I 'd like to go just the worst way. Been counting on it ever since I got the invitation ; but the way things have turned out, I just can 't do it, no way I can fix it. I 've got to stay at home and try these oxen and see how they 'll drive. You see I 've just been buying them, provided they suit, and I 've got to decide to-morrow whether I 'll take them or not. They look like powerful good oxen, but oxen are mighty deceiving, you know ; and you can 't always tell by their looks how they 'll turn out. Ho, Buck ! Gee, Bright ! Stand still, there ! That big red fellow there has fine limbs on him ; but he 's got a look out of his eye I do n't just like, and I 'm afraid he 's stubborn. Tell your governor I 'm pretty near crying because I can 't go ; but circumstances are such that he 'll have to excuse me this time. Tell him just how it is, and I

know it will be all right with him. You can say that you've seen the oxen yourself, and they look like a breechy lot, and in these times a body has got to be prudent and careful about what they buy. I remember about ten years ago—I think it was ten years ago last fall, or may be now it was next fall, I can't say just which; but it was about that long ago—I did get most unmercifully skinned in an ox-trade that I made with my eyes half shut, and it taught me a lesson I'll never forget, if I live as long as our fathers made brick in Egypt. You see, it was this way—" but the servant has too much to do to stop to hear his long story, and away he goes on the gallop to the next place.

The five-yoke man was no small fish of a farmer. He no doubt owned bottom land, and employed hired help. He was also a man of influence in his community. A man who could buy five yoke of oxen all at one time was somebody to be looked up to, just as many of us are looked up to to-day by others who live around us. We are being anxiously watched by young men and women, who want to see what kind of a stand we are going to take on this question of salvation. Other farmers who couldn't buy more than three yoke of oxen at one time were watching this five-yoke man with a good deal of interest, to see whether he could spare the time to go to this supper or not. If he couldn't do it, they had no business to think of such a thing. They were in debt to him for seed-corn or something of the sort, probably, and to keep their credit good with him it was their business to keep on the jump as persistently as he did. When the servant

galloped up to one of these three-yoke men with his lord's message, the first thing he wanted to know was what the five-yoke man was going to do; and when he found out that he was too busy to go, he grabbed up his hoe and went to mashing clods as though his life depended on it.

Every one who puts off giving his heart to Christ at once is causing somebody else to do the same thing. No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. Everybody is leading somebody else. From the three-yoke man I think I can see the servant riding to the two-yoke man, and then to the one-yoke man, and then to the fellow who can only buy one steer, and then to the one who can only get a heifer; and so on down till he comes to the man who can only buy a calf, and whose excuse is that he has got to go and teach it to drink milk out of a crock, or it will die on his hands. Every man has his excuse ready the moment he finds the others have sent regrets, and the result is that the supper is kept waiting because there are no guests. Had the first man had the team hitched up, and been ready to start when the servant came to him, all the others would have joined the procession, and, instead of disappointment at the feast, there would have been great rejoicing.

"I pray thee have me excused, because I've got to do this, or I've got to do that." Every preacher who ever started a protracted meeting is familiar with this chorus. He has heard it sung time and time again, in all its changes. There are men by the hundred who will sit around the fire and crack walnuts all winter, until it is announced that a meet-

ing is about to begin, and then they will rush out and go to hauling straw or saw-logs, or handle timber, or corn, or fodder, or something of that kind, as though their very lives depended on it, and for no other reason under the sun than to have an excuse for keeping away from the meetings. There is many a man of this kind who will find, when he comes to die, that he has filled the gate of heaven so full of rubbish he hauled to market during a protracted meeting that there isn't room enough left for his small soul to squeeze in. Of what use is it for a father of that kind to talk to his sons about being religious? Thousands of places can be found where people of this kind are doing more hurt to the cause of Christ than the worst saloon in the county. Be something, brother! If you profess to be a Christian, be one all over.

It will be observed that the reason the lord of the feast declared that not one of these people should taste of his supper was not on account of their doing things that shocked him, but simply on account of their treatment of him. They disregarded his kindness and rejected his hospitality. They were all for self, and gave no thought to him. They thought only of their own petty concerns, and were utterly heedless of what he had done for them. They were indifferent to the fact that the supper had been prepared expressly for them; that the lord of the feast was seeking their pleasure, and not his own; that he had gone to great trouble and expense, in order that they might all meet in his friendly home, and rejoice with him and with each other; and, after all he had done for their good, to be flatly

told that they preferred their oxen to his society—that they would rather scratch around in the dirt, trying to find a little money, than to sit down and feast with him at his own table—was what pained his heart and stirred up his righteous indignation.

There was nothing wrong in the things they wanted to do. They were commendable and proper at the right time; but they wanted to do them at the wrong time, and it was in this that their offending consisted. It was altogether proper for the man who had bought ground to look at it, and make plans as to its cultivation; and it was not only prudent, but commendable, in the man who had bought the oxen that he should try them, and make sure that they would suit him; it was also praiseworthy in the bridegroom that he should want to get to living under his own vine and fig-tree as soon as possible. But all of these things could have been deferred a day longer just as well as not, and it was a gross insult to their host to assign them as reasons for rejecting his hospitality. They could wait, but the feast could not. The supper had been prepared especially for these people, and their first duty was to the man who had so signally honored them as to offer to make them his guests. Nothing short of life or death could have been reasonable excuse for their staying away. By not going to the banquet prepared for them, they were robbing their host as certainly as though they had broken into his house at midnight and carried off his goods; for they were taking from him that which was of more value than money. It was something money could not buy

Our great sins do not consist in the things we

do, but in those we neglect to do. In all his illustrations of the judgment, our Savior never condemned anybody for committing great acts of positive sin, but always and only for neglecting to do some essential thing. There was doubtless no very great difference between the two thieves crucified with Christ, in their actual crimes, but one went to heaven and the other to hell. And the one who was lost did not go into eternal burning because he was a scarlet sinner, but because he neglected to ask the Son of God to be his Savior. It was not because the man with the one talent tried to steal it, but because he neglected to use it, that he lost it. The foolish virgins were not kept out because they quarreled and had a fight on the way, but because they neglected to take oil with them. The man at the wedding was not cast out because he had behaved unruly, but because he had neglected to put on the wedding garment provided for him; and so it was neglect of the people, in our lesson, to go to the feast, that provoked the lord of the supper. And if you and I fail to reach heaven, it will not be because we have been such great sinners that God could not forgive us, but because we have neglected to ask him to do it.

The next noticeable thing in the lesson is the wonderful zeal and fidelity of the servant. He didn't get discouraged because he couldn't persuade anybody to start for the feast, as so many of us would have done, and go back to his master in great despondency, and tell him to pay him off and let him quit, or else give him a hoe and let him go into the garden and do something that was easier

and more promising in immediate results. Not a bit of it! He wasn't that kind of a man. The spirit of his master seemed to possess him, and no matter what he was told to do, he went at it with a zeal and an enthusiasm that puts us all to shame. He never said, "I pray thee have me excused." Not once. He never hinted at such a thing. He had no fear that he was going to have to do more work than he would be paid for. When the master told him to go out quickly, he did n't growl and grumble that he was not properly appreciated, or that he was overworked, or that there was no use in being in such a desperate hurry; but away he went as soon as he got his new commission, probably on a fresh mule, with just as much enthusiasm as he had when he first set out for the house of the man who had bought the field; and it wasn't long before the people from the streets and lanes began to come in and report. On he went, from one street to another, as fast as his mule could travel, and everybody he fell in with was told about the wonderful supper which was waiting there on his master's table for somebody to come and eat it; and the thought that everybody could go and be welcome at the grand feast which had been prepared with so much care for the very best people in the community, no doubt made his heart burn with joy to such an extent that his eyes were fairly dancing with delight, and every one who saw him seemed to be at once warmed by his presence, and drawn toward the house of his master. "Surely," they thought, "if the servant is so sunshiny, the master himself must be the most glorious man who ever lived;" and it

was n't long before the roadways were lined with the crowds whom the servant's burning words of invitation had turned toward the feast. When everybody from the streets and lanes had been gathered in, he didn't stop, and say: "Well, I've done everything the master told me, and I'm tired almost to death; and so I guess I'll put up the mule, and lie down and rest. I have n't been so near used up for I couldn't tell when."

That's what very many of us would have done; but the faithful servant didn't behave in that way. His unselfishness was truly wonderful. His whole soul was in the work his master had given him to do, and he was so anxious that his name should be honored and his feast enjoyed, that he forgot all about himself. He was so full of zeal and enthusiasm for his lord that he forgot that he had a nervous system liable to be shattered by overwork, and he never stopped to think that it was this thing of telling good news with so much vim and persistency that gives men the bronchitis. He was n't afraid that somebody would call him a crank because of his unheard-of zeal; and he seems to have had no fear that his fellow-servants would think he had n't done much, unless he complained of being broken clear down, and called for a vacation to go over to Mount Pisgah and recuperate. Whatever he was told to do, he did it well and with all his might; and as long as there was anything to do he found joy in keeping busy. As soon as everybody from the streets and lanes had been gathered in, he ran to his master with glowing face, and said: "It is done, just as you told me, master; I've brought them all. There

was a great crowd of them, and yet there is room for many more."

This time the master tells him to go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, for he is determined to have his house full. He was to take no excuses from anybody this time, but compel them all to come in. "Compel them to come in!" That meant business in earnest. I don't believe anybody with a whole heart ever tried to preach the gospel without feeling at times as though he must do that very thing or die. The earnest Christian worker often finds it hard work to keep his hands off of people in the street whom he sees rushing headlong to destruction. He wants to compel them to come into the Church, and taste and see for themselves that God is good. It was stated in the newspapers some time ago that there was a cowboy evangelist down in Mexico who would walk into a saloon with a cocked revolver in each hand, and order everybody to put down their glasses and hear him preach the gospel; and sometimes hardened men actually had their hearts softened to repentance by something they heard while looking into the barrel of his pistol. That was compelling them to come in, sure enough.

Most of us want our work to be growing lighter all the time, and we are dissatisfied unless it is; but that of the servant became a little harder every time he was sent out. The plan of the Methodist itinerancy was reversed in his case. He began among the nabobs, and ended on the hardest kind of a circuit. The first time he was sent out, all he had to do was to go to the best people and say, "*Come!*"

The next time he was ordered to go "quickly" and "*bring*," and now he was commanded to go among the people who had the least respect for his master, and "*compel*" them to come in. But he hasn't a word of complaint to make, and does not insist upon having a better appointment. To have a chance to do anything for such a master is all the glory he wants. It is clear that he enjoyed the confidence of his master to a remarkable degree, because the means to be employed were left entirely to his discretion. The command was urgent, but he was left free to decide how it should be accomplished.

Before his master is hardly done speaking, he is on his mule again, galloping toward his new field of labor. I think I can see him halting before a blind beggar who has n't had a square meal for many a day. He tells the poor fellow about the grand supper in a way that makes his mouth water; but he shakes his head sadly, and says that such fine things are not for him.

"Yes, they are," says the servant, with a joyous burst of enthusiasm; "you'll be made as welcome as the finest lord in the land. Whosoever will, may come. That's just what my master told me to say to everybody; and 'whosoever' means you as much as it does a prince."

But the beggar is blind and lame and helpless, and can't do a thing toward getting there without help; and so, before he hardly knows it, the servant has got him up on the mule behind him, and away they go, galloping down the road toward the master's house. It is n't long after they get there before the beggar has been taken to the bath-room

and washed, and dressed in the fine robe prepared by the master of the feast; and then the servant leads him to the table, and fills his plate with the very best things in reach, and then he stands where he can see his face light up when he first fills his hungry mouth. For a minute or two he watches that hungry beggar putting the good things out of sight, and as he sees his face shine with a joy that was never there before, it makes his own heart leap with new delight; and away he goes again, as hard as his mule can gallop, after somebody else. And so he keeps on compelling them to come in, by first one means and then another, until his master's table has been filled; and then I think I can hear the master say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy lord;" and then he takes the seat which has been reserved for him beside his master, and rejoices a thousand times more in the feast than he could possibly have done if he had not had anything to do with getting the people there. Everybody is happy, and the servant most of all—because he has had so much to do in bringing about the joyful meeting. I think I can hear many of them telling the happy servant just what word or look it was of his that induced them to turn their faces toward the feast; and those whom he compelled to come in throng about him with eyes swimming with love, and say: "If it hadn't been for what you did when I was so stubborn and deaf to your entreaties, I never would have got to this blessed place. Never!"

And then they shower upon him benedictions of praise, while his lord smiles sweetly upon him, and

says: "From this day you shall be my son." And at that he places upon his head a band of gold filled with jewels that shine like the stars, and everybody sings with joy because the faithful servant who brought them to the feast is happy in the favor of his lord.

At this moment there is a violent knocking at the great hall door, and I think I can recognize the voice of the man who bought the piece of ground, crying in a loud tone: "Lord, lord, open unto me! Open unto me! I did n't like the looks of the field near as much as I thought I would, and so I've come to your supper. Let me in!"

At the next instant there is another violent knock, and the five-yoke man also cries out, in a voice heavy with trouble: "Lord, lord, open unto me! Open unto me! I tried my oxen, and they gave me no satisfaction; and so I have come to your feast!"

And, one after another, come all who had said, "I pray thee have me excused," and clamor for admission to the feast; but the door has been shut, and not one of them can get in. The words of the lord are, "Not one of these shall taste of my supper!"

Brother, sister, to-day the summons comes to you again from the Lord of the feast—"Come, for all things are now ready!" What response are you going to make?

CHAPTER III.

THE PROPHET ELIJAH.

Some Thoughts on Practical Ministry Suggested
by a Study of His Life.

THE first view we get of Elijah he seems to have been filling a city appointment with rather poor success, and at our introduction to him he is just concluding a sermon before the king, which had a great deal of himself and very little gospel in it. Like many new beginners, he seemed to attach a great deal of importance to his own word, and not enough to that of his Divine Master to insure immediate success; and from his closing remarks and what immediately followed, it would seem that there was too much of the Tishbite and not enough of the prophet of God alive within him to make his continuance in that field of labor longer desirable.

In the next scene, therefore, we see him receiving an appointment from the Jordan Conference to the Cherith Circuit, upon which he enters with a spirit of such sweet and uncomplaining obedience that we instinctively hold up our hands in wondering admiration; for the prospect before him was about the least inviting upon which a man of God ever entered. Yet he "moved" without a murmur,

and performed his part faithfully and well until he received another assignment. In his instructions he was charged to turn eastward and hide himself—a charge that every worker for God should strive to follow to the very letter. Keep your face continually toward the source of light. Look to God and hide yourself, and success is bound to come. He was also admonished that he should drink of the brook, which was to afford him an ample supply while he remained there. Every preacher should drink of the brook beside which God places him. Its life should become his. To help the people he must mingle with them, be of them, and know them.

To deliver the prophet from all uneasiness in temporal matters, he was assured that the ravens had been commanded to feed him there—a duty which they performed with a faithfulness and regularity that many of the official brethren of to-day would do well to ponder upon. In this field of labor Elijah acquitted himself in a most praiseworthy manner, and got down to work on a solid Scripture basis; for we are told that he went and did according unto the word of the Lord.

No man ever went to market with his pocket full of money with any less concern as to the outcome, than Elijah picked up his saddle-bags and went to his new station on the brook Cherith, the day when the voice of God reached him, and told him that the ravens would see to it that he did not suffer for want of anything to eat. A good many of us would have given the ravens a holiday to begin with, while we sat down to study about the matter; but Elijah was ready to start without a moment's

uneasiness, as soon as he got the word to move forward. Before some of us would have been willing to get out of sight of a bakery, we would have wanted to know something about Cherith, and whether the ravens of that country were reliable, whether they were few or many, and whether they were much given to quarreling among themselves or not. We would have wanted to know how far they would have to go after supplies, and how many meals a day they were to bring us, and whether it was to be cooked and ready to put right on the table or not. We would have wanted to know a good deal about the character of the particular ravens that were to keep us in provisions—how many of them were eminently respectable, and how many were just common birds. We would have wanted to know whether the Cherith ravens were as unreliable in character as their brethren in other sections. These, and a great many other things, we would have wanted to know before we began to pack our knapsacks. But all that Elijah wanted to know was that the Lord was to go with him, and he was ready to start as soon as he could put on his sandals.

The same courage was also manifest when he went to Zarephath, where he had been told that a poor widow woman was to take the place of the ravens in preparing his meals for him. There are a good many preachers living to-day who would have been scared clear out of Zarephath in a hurry by just one look into that poor woman's flour-barrel; but Elijah had no concern about the matter, because he knew God, and had found out by past

experience some of the wonderful things which his God could do whenever there was need for them. He had an experience that was not mildewed by non-use, but was a living, growing reality. He had never had his meals more promptly in his life than he had had them during the last three years. God looked after the supplies, and there was never any failure in their regularity. His mother might have forgotten him sometimes, and been late with his breakfast now and then; but God never failed him. He made the ravens prepare the table for him with as much precision as the sun rose and set. It did n't make any difference where those birds were, or what they were doing, they had to drop everything else and take the prophet bread and flesh every night, and no preacher who looks after his own appointments has ever had his marketing done with any more regularity than those ravens did it for Elijah. And so the Carmelite had come to know a great deal of God by a gradual and continuous experience. When he wanted to talk about the goodness of God, he did n't have to go back forty-seven years to find a place to begin, but he could start right where he was at that very minute, and tell what God's mercy meant to him then. There is nothing dry or monotonous about the testimony of the people who continually walk with God.

We don't know anything about the life of Elijah previous to the day that he stood before Ahab, and told him that the angels who empty the clouds had all been made subject to his orders, and that the weather probabilities indicated that a long season of dry weather for that locality might be looked for. We

don't know to what tribe he belonged, nor who his father was, nor how long he had been performing the duties of a prophet, but we do know that he must have had an unusual experience with God. He had tasted and knew for himself that God was good, and he knew that whatever he promised he was able also to perform.

The day that the ravens brought him his first meal was not the first day that Elijah had knowingly received his bread from God. We know this because the beginning of faith is always like a grain of mustard-seed. There isn't much of it to start on; but as it tries God and finds him true, it grows and becomes at last a great tree. It is likely, therefore, that if the whole religious life of Elijah could be known, it would be full of thrilling interest; but only that part of it is used which the Holy Ghost found needful to tell us something of God. It is more than likely that it took many years of preparation, by various trials and tests, to bring the prophet to the point where God could trust him with such untold power as to control the clouds for a whole kingdom.

God knows man thoroughly, and never has to try any experiment to find out what is in him; but no man is any account for the Lord until he knows God for himself, and knows him well enough to know that he can be trusted. It is for this reason that the man who is called of God for a certain work has to be first prepared for it by a succession of trials and experiences that will teach him that everything he lacks, God is. The man must not only know God, and love God, and trust God, but he

must be made to know for himself that such is really the case. As long as a man has the slightest doubt in his own mind whether he is really standing squarely upon the hand of God or not, there is danger of failure in everything he undertakes; but when he finds out beyond all question that his trust in God is complete, what a tower of strength he is from that day forth! Before any man can know very much of God, he must find out a good deal about himself.

A noticeable thing about the ministry of Elijah was, that he always "lived on his work," and put in all his time right where the Lord placed him. We don't hear of his taking any summer vacations—aside from his excursion to the juniper-tree—or of spending a good share of his time in looking after his farm somewhere, though it must be admitted that he did at one time pre-empt a small piece of depressed real estate in the vicinity of Horeb, to which he seems to have become strongly attached; but even that he was willing to give up without a protest, when his unministerial conduct was pointed out at the next Conference.

As to the devotion of Elijah and his obedience, we are told that whenever the word of the Lord came to him, he always went and did according unto it. The deep principle of his life was unshaken loyalty. His whole heart was loyal to God, and the golden precept of his life was: "Thy will, not mine." His own comfort was never sought or thought of. Whenever the Divine message came to him and said, "Go thou," he went promptly and willingly, without a single disturbing thought as to the result.

O how his great soul was constantly anchored to God by the bond of trust! No matter what the prospect was, he never wavered or requested time for reflection. If it was to go with the chance of apparent starvation and great bodily discomfort, and pitch his tent beside the brook, he went. If it was to go at the risk of his life, and show himself to Ahab, he went. No matter what the message, he obeyed it cheerfully; and whenever and wherever the word of God found him, it found him in the path of duty, save with the single exception already mentioned, and even that digression was after the great work of his life had been completed, and he was near superannuation.

His trust in God was exemplified in his constant peacefulness and freedom from all concern on the question of supplies, no matter how unassuring the outlook happened to be. If he was told that the ravens would feed him, all his uneasiness about the future was at once quieted, and he looked no further. He trusted in the Lord with all his heart, and found perfect and constant peace in that trust.

Brethren, if we would only put ourselves in the hands of the Lord as completely as Elijah did, there would never be any trouble about our support, no matter how wide-sweeping the famine might happen to be. The same God who made the raven, a bird of prey, take meat out of his own mouth and give it to Elijah, still lives and reigns; and he can just as easily open the tightest pockets in our charges, and he will do it, too, if we are equally faithful.

The prophet, in visible assets, was so poor that he had nothing but a shabby mantle to leave his servant; and yet the arms of God were continually about him, and no good thing was ever denied him. He always had an abiding place; bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and finally, when his mission was fulfilled, he was sent sweeping up to glory without stopping to change his clothes, and for the first time the angels had an opportunity to gather about his chariot, as it halted in front of his mansion of splendor, to behold what a faithful preacher fresh from the front looked like.

The peaceful spirit of the prophet's trust stands out with the vividness of lightning at midnight when he received his marching orders for Zarephath. We are told that the word of the Lord came to him, saying: "Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." So he arose and went to Zarephath, with a prospect of short commons before him, without the slightest hint of a protest against the appointment.

Some preachers in our time would have fallen back in the harness, and got balky right there, and the Zarephath station would have had to be undertaken by some man who had fat on his ribs to begin with. They would have come before the cabinet with a face full of doleful looks, and said: "I really ought to have something better this time. For lo these many days I've been as good as buried among the crows down there at Cherith, without

the sight of a single friendly face, a congregation full of croakers, dependent entirely upon donations for my support, and sustained by a monotony of fare that took away all appetite. I think I ought to have a better place this time, and justice to my health demands it. To have that poor, hungry widow and her sickly boy confronting me every time I sat down to the table, and to know that every crumb I put into my mouth was baked from the scrapings of her flour-barrel, would choke me, and take all the inspiration out of me. I can't go there; send me somewhere else."

But, bless you, no disagreeable and mischief-making thoughts of that kind ever got into the head of Elijah. The question with him was n't as to where he would like to go, but, "Lord, where do you want me?" and, with a manner as joyous as a psalm, he picked up his saddle-bags, and set out for Zarephath by the shortest route; and when he got to the gate of the city, behold, there was the widow gathering sticks to cook his supper!

Brethren, did it ever strike you that whenever God has wanted an instrument for immediate use he has always taken some one who was busy? Moses was tending the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, in Midian. Joseph was on his way to his brethren with a message. Saul was hunting for the stray asses. David was taking supplies to his brethren in the army. Peter was fishing; John and James were mending their nets; Matthew was collecting taxes; Saul was going to Damascus on the gallop. And now, here was this poor widow, with starvation staring her in the face, gathering sticks,

and trying to do something to better her condition. When Satan wants a helper he takes the first idler he comes to; but in the ranks of God, only the diligent are wanted.

But to go back to Elijah. When he sees the widow he steps up cheerfully, and says, in a voice that seems to assure her a friend stands before her:

“Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.”

And then, as she starts to give a ready compliance, he speaks up again, and says:

“Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thy hand.”

She need n't go to the trouble of putting it on a plate. He was used to roughing it, and could take it as it came from the ashes; and from the scarcity of water at the time, there was a good deal of kindness in this concession. If preachers would always carry this same spirit of consideration with them in their visits to their people, they would never lack for a true welcome.

Although God sent Elijah to the widow with the assurance that she would sustain him—and this to him implied that God would give her the ability—the prophet made no great demands upon her. He did n't call for hot coffee and chicken to begin with, and order her to send her boy out to put his camel up; but he only asked for what he really needed—a little water and a morsel of bread.

A handful of meal in the barrel and a little oil in the cruse was n't much from a human standpoint, but it was all that God needed to support his prophet and the family of the widow until rain

came upon the earth. With God a little is enough, and enough is abundance. God could just as easily have sent Elijah to be entertained by the lord mayor of Zidon; but if he had, Ahab would have been sure to find him there; and, besides that, God glorified himself the more, and at the same time sustained the faithful widow and her son, by sending his prophet to be entertained by them instead. It may also be that this is to teach people who never want to take a preacher home to dinner with them, something to their advantage.

Elijah was all the better prepared to go to Zarephath by what had happened at Cherith. His experience there was a blessed one, because it brought him very near to God, and kept him there. I don't think Elijah ever tasted much sweeter bread than that the ravens brought to him, down in that little valley. If he did, it must have been that which was made from the scrapings of the widow's flour-barrel; because no man ever sits down to any table in this world so good as the one he knows God has prepared for him. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies," means such a feast as no king ever sat down to, unless God led him to it.

It was the experience which the prophet had beside the little brook which made it possible for him to go to his new home, where the visible prospect was so discouraging, with such a remarkable peace of mind as we find him possessed of. Every one who ever amounts to much for good in anything has to be hid for a season beside some little brook, where he can be taught how to win great

victories on the mountain-top. The real king is always a shepherd-boy to begin with, and does not spring to the throne at a bound, head and shoulders above every other man.

Elijah's faith in the power of God's word, although conspicuous throughout his ministry, comes out strong when he is told to go and show himself to Ahab, and rain shall be sent upon the earth. Elijah knew that Ahab was his bitterest enemy, and he also doubtless knew that he had been searching for him in every nation and kingdom; and now he was told to go and seek this great enemy, to boldly walk into his presence, and that would occur which would dispel all his enmity. It took strong faith on the part of Elijah to overcome natural feeling and step forth upon the naked promise of God as he was told to do. But the faith was not lacking, and it brought the protection upon which he had depended. His supreme desire to have God known and honored of all men is clearly apparent in the scene upon Mt. Carmel. See him, as he stands there, strong and straight as an oak before the storm gathering about him, and mark his every act and word. He knew by faith what the result would be—that the smile of God would soon touch the earth right there—and his heart was so full of religion, pure and undefiled, that he wanted everybody to come and stand where the blessing was so soon to fall. His first demand of Ahab indicates this—"Now, therefore, send and gather all Israel unto Mt. Carmel." And then, again, when the prophets of Baal had lost the day, and his opportunity had come, even before he had laid a single stone of the altar, or had

gathered a stick of wood, or had killed his bullock, or even before he had prayed, he said unto all the people, "Come near unto me;" and he said it in such a way that all the people did come near unto him. And when he got them there—and not till then—he went at that broken-down altar, and soon had everything in shape for the placing of the sacrifice upon it. Like every true lover of God, he wanted everybody blessed. His heart was big enough to throb for all mankind; and, brethren, when we, as preachers, reach this same blessed condition, the music of heaven will soon be heard among our people. His preaching that day was not to a small circle, but to *all the people*; and in this particular the preachers of this generation should also be wise, and profit by his example. Try to preach to *all the people*—the saints and the sinners, those in the "Amen Corner," and those near the door. Have something for the children as well as for the gray-beards; something for the women as well as for the men; for the boys as well as for the girls; something for the burdened and the careless, the thoughtful and the giddy. Try to give a little salt to every one of God's sheep.

Let us continually have the thought in mind that we are here, in the stead of Christ, to feed the multitude; and though we may have only a few small loaves and fishes with which to do it, let us not try to keep back some of them for another occasion, but let them all go, and with God's blessing there will always be more to gather up than there was to begin with.

Elijah knew that he stood on safe ground, and

he wanted all the people to share in his safety. Whenever you testify for Christ, don't whittle while you are doing it. Be in earnest about it, and tell the people, like Job, that you *know* that your Redeemer lives; and tell them in such a way as to compel them to know that you do know it. One Ezekiel can infuse life into a whole army of dry bones. If we could all get as much in earnest for God as Elijah was, angels would almost quit singing for awhile to watch and help us.

When the people had heard the words of Elijah, and had acted upon them by coming near to where the blessing was to fall, he took immediate steps to comply with all the human conditions for securing the favor of God, by repairing the altar of the Lord which was broken down. God never sends fire upon a broken-down altar—remember that! Before the fire will come, both preacher and people must be near the altar, the altar must be repaired—and that, too, so that every tribe will be represented—and then, when the wood is properly placed, and the sacrifice is duly laid upon it, it will not matter how much of opposition there may be. God will send fire strong enough to overcome and destroy it all. When we have done our part faithfully, God never fails to perform his. If the fire does not come, we may take it for granted we have left out a stone or two, that the wood is not properly laid, or that the sacrifice may not have been cut into sufficiently small pieces to prove that it has no blemish.

No matter where we find Elijah, his position at that moment can be studied with great profit. The prophets of Baal were impatient to begin early in

the morning, without a care as to the condition of their altar. But Elijah was in no hurry; he had a certainty before him, and could afford to wait. He was going to have things right to begin with, if it took till sundown. God's man never hurries. Hence, with the greatest care, Elijah set about perfecting every detail. He looked after everything himself, and knew that no part of the work had been slighted. He did n't appoint one committee to get the stones together, another to lay them up, or depend upon somebody working by the day to dig the trench; but he hung his mantle on the nearest limb, rolled up his sleeves, and went to work himself. No wonder that at the proper moment he could turn his face toward God, and ask for fire without the slightest tremor of uncertainty in his voice. He knew that his part had been faithfully and fully performed, without the chance of neglect anywhere; and this gave him courage to fold his arms complacently, and call for water with a high head, in spite of the dark looks of frowning skepticism all about him, and then exultingly say: "Fill four more barrels!"

And not only once, but again and again, till the third time. O, for faith like this, with which to defy the devil and his whole army from flank to flank, reserves and all—from the heavy siege-guns of the whisky battery to the sappers and miners of the "no harm" battalion!

There was n't any sense in Elijah going on the dead gallop ahead of the chariot of Ahab down to Jezreel, and he would n't have done it if it had not been for the wonderful way in which he had used

up Baal's prophets. He made a fool of himself then, just as men do in election times now, because his head was so completely turned by his wonderful success that he didn't know what he was up to. It took a great deal of strength for him to keep ahead of a team of good horses for seventeen miles, and he might have used it to much better advantage in a good many other ways; but just then he was so puffed up with pride over his success that he wanted to go into Jezreel at the head of the procession, and give the people down there a chance to feast their eyes on the man who had been doing such wonderful things. This made him forget all about God, and get where divine aid could n't reach him. These same experiences that Elijah had are still happening to Christians, in a spiritual way, everywhere to-day. The story of Mt. Carmel one week, and the juniper-tree and the cavern the next, is still repeating itself all around the world. Nothing wears out the man of God any faster than running before the chariot of Ahab; but as long as the devil can get people to look at themselves they will be sure to do it. Nothing makes a Christian feel so much like finding a cave, and crawling into it to hide himself, as to suddenly discover that he has been saying or doing something foolish in his religious life..

It is a dangerous day for a preacher when he preaches the greatest sermon of his life. Failure is always next-door neighbor to success. A man never needs the grace of God so much as he does when, by reason of some unusual exploit, he begins to find a good deal of satisfaction in looking

at himself. Looking to Jesus brings angels to help us, but looking at ourselves fills the hills with the enemy's archers. Defeat at Ai is very apt to follow victory at Jericho in every life. It is when we are not looking at the robber that he is most likely to come. As long as God has to use men for preachers, it is not to be wondered at that we do not have more revivals. The minister is more in danger of drifting away from God by one overwhelming, wide-sweeping revival than he is by meeting with a dozen defeats. The child is willing to be carried up hill, but when it gets to the top it wants to run alone; and it isn't very long until there is a tumble. Be sure to keep very close to God, whenever you hear the shouts of victory in your own Church. Spiritual pride is an enemy who is always watching very closely all along the border. If you make an extra good prayer, you will make a great many poor ones before you will make another.

What a contrast there is between the conduct of the prophet as he stands boldly on the mountain-top, openly defying the organized enemies of God, and the cowardly man who is stealing away in the darkness because an angry woman has threatened to take his life! He fails now because he has taken the campaign into his own hands, and has forgotten to ask God to plan it and direct it. The devil has so blinded him that he can not see that the God of yesterday will be his God to-day, if he will but trust him. He forgets all about the past now, as he leaves his servant to look out for himself, and breaks pell-mell for the wilderness. If he would but stop

for a moment, and think of the years when the ravens fed him, and when the widow's meal and oil failed not, his heart would soon be strong again, because his faith in God would be sure to return. The devil would never be able to keep a backslider in his army, if he could n't make him forget the past mercies of God. It is an awful thing for any man who has ever been used of God to think that he has lost the divine favor. When that time comes there is sure to be a prayer for death, just as there was in Elijah's case. A discouraged man is one of the saddest sights that angels have ever had to look at. There never was a man so weak or so foolish that God could n't use him and do wonderful things through him; but there is n't a line in the Bible to show that he has ever been able to accomplish anything with a discouraged man, except to use him as a warning to keep others from falling into the same pit.

It seems that Elijah was n't under the juniper-tree very long before he was sound asleep, and might have died of want, had it not been for the faithfulness of the God whom he had forgotten. When a Christian gets out of his right place it is impossible to keep him awake. There was n't any ravens in that country that could be commissioned to look after his provisions, and no poor widow with a few consecrated crumbs that could be used to sustain him; but God did n't propose that the man he had selected to take up bodily into heaven should starve himself to death and thus defeat his purpose, and so this time an angel was sent to prepare his breakfast and call him up to eat it. How

full of light and hope these verses ought to be to every wayward child of God who has made sad blunders and mistakes—and who has not? No mother ever whips her child, and puts it out of doors in the cold, because it falls down when it is trying to learn to walk; and God never gives up any man, simply because he thinks he has failed, for good.

What a glorious thing it is for every one of us that the record of Peter's life didn't end in the scene where he denies his Lord, and that Elijah's grave was not made under the juniper-tree! Brother, if you have been unfaithful, God loves you still, and has plans for you more glorious than anything you can conceive. Don't refuse the bread of love the angel of his mercy offers. Arise, eat it, and go gladly on thy way. Men turn coldly away from us when we fail to accomplish the grand things we had set out to do, but God never does. When the prodigal got home he found that his father had always been looking for him to come back. God always runs to meet the sinner who repents, and never stops trying to use an earnest man because he may sometimes make a mistake.

It only took Elijah a day to run away from God, but it took the Lord more than forty days to get him back. We know this, because he went in the strength of the meat the angel gave him forty days, and had to be driven out of the cave in which he was hiding by the hurricane, the earthquake, and the fire. A word from Jesus caused Matthew, the publican, to get right up and leave a profitable business to become a disciple; but see how hard

God had to work to reclaim this prophet backslider! It was a serious mistake of Elijah to "go in the strength of that meat forty days," although it was food that had been prepared in heaven. No matter who the man is, as soon as he stops taking proper food he begins to live on his own vitals; and the house divided against itself must sooner or later go under. If there is any one in this world who needs to have his meals with regularity, it is the man who is working for God. As long as the prophet was having bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, his faith was all right. Whenever you find a Christian who has lost his spiritual power, and has begun to growl and find fault, you can write it down that he has been neglecting his Bible and his closet. The order in the wilderness was that the manna should be gathered every day; and that is still the divine requirement. When our Savior taught his disciples to pray for their bread, he knew it was necessary that they should have it fresh and frequent; and so he taught them to ask for it and expect it every day. You never find people hiding in the dark from God, or justifying themselves for doing this questionable thing or that, who sit down daily to eat bread at the table of the Lord. One of the first symptoms that a man is starving spiritually is that he can't bear the light. It hurts his eyes, and makes him fretful and peevish; and for that reason he runs away from the call of duty, until he thinks he has finally hid himself from God in the dark of a deadened conscience.

No man in a cave can ever get much of a view

of what is going on outside. The most of us live too low to see very high, or we would n't go about with long faces whenever things do not seem to be going right in the Church. Ever since the fall, God has had trouble in getting the sons of men to look up. The world is full of people who could n't tell what kind of chimneys there are on their own houses, to save their lives. Because this leading brother has skinned that one in a horse-trade, or Sister So-and-so has been talking about Sister Such-a-one, and other members have been doing this and not doing that, we conclude that the devil is having things all his own way, and we might as well shut up the church and quit. Nothing so dishonors God as for us to live so low that we can't see any higher than the feet of men. As long as we are not doing anything but looking at other people to see what God is doing, we haven't got a grain of faith; and we are never more wicked than when we are patting ourselves on the head, and calling the attention of the Lord to the fact that we are about the only people in all our neighborhood that he can depend upon. When a soldier is skulking behind the wagons in time of battle, it is a poor time for him to proudly call attention to his patriotism; and yet our Churches are full of people who do things just as foolish.

Whenever the devil can get one of God's people to believe that he is about the only out-and-out righteous man in the whole country, he is very well pleased with his day's work. Whenever you can't see anything in other people that suits you, make up your mind that you need a revival of religion in

your own heart; and the sooner you go to praying and believing for it, the better you will please the Lord. When a man goes around saying, "I am very jealous for the Lord of hosts," the chances are that he has already begun to backslide, and it will be well enough to keep an eye on him if you have much to do with him in business. The way to get reliable information about God, and to keep strong for his service, is not to be looking into the Church or the newspapers for it, but to go to head-quarters. What does God himself say? How reads the Bible? What say the promises? Are they still "yea and amen," or have they been changed to "may be so" and "sometimes?" It is a dishonor to God for the Christian to worry about anything, and especially so about the Lord's own work. We might as well begin to fret for fear we will all freeze to death next winter because somebody says he has seen spots on the sun. One of the biggest mistakes any of us can make is to undertake to carry the Lord's burdens. The thing to do is to believe in God, and keep on believing in him, no matter what happens. God can get along without the sun a great deal easier than he can without our continual trust in him. Let us spread the wings of faith, and get high enough, and we will find that he has never lost a battle. Christ came to save the world, and he is able for the work. The thing for each one of us to do is to keep looking to him so fully that he can use us as he will at all times to help do it.

God never has much to say to people who insist on living in the dark. He didn't have anything to make known to Elijah while he was hiding in the

cave, but he had wonderful things to reveal as soon as he got him out. The storm and the earthquake and the fire were means that had to be used to get the attention of the prophet to the still small voice, and these things still have to happen to-day in many lives. Men sometimes hide in the cave of worldly prosperity, and the hurricane of bankruptcy has to come sweeping down upon them before they will stop making money long enough to hear the voice of God telling them that he created them for something nobler and better. At other times they bury themselves away from heaven's light by seeking the fame and empty honor that the applause of men can give; and some day, when they least expect it, the earthquake of defeat and dethronement overturns all their plans, in order that they may be driven out into the light, where they can hear the voice of the King's messenger telling them of a glory to be had which is eternal and fadeth not away. At other times men and women so hide themselves in the cave of selfishness that the fire of death and affliction must smite the home before they will come out on the mountain of submission, and learn of the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and whose maker and builder is God. God is not in any of the things that cause us pain and sorrow and trouble; but, blessed be his name! he is always in the still small voice of comfort which follows them and tells of his faithfulness and never-failing love.

Brother, if you have been afflicted in any unusual way, stop, turn your eyes toward the light, and listen; for God is about to speak. He wants to say

something to you that cost the blood of Christ to get to you with the message. Every friend you have ever had on earth who is now in heaven wants you to hear what God will say. Listen to the still small voice of his unspeakable love.

Like every one who is not where God wants him, Elijah sought to justify himself, just as Adam did, by trying to put the blame on some one else. On Mount Carmel he had no fault to find with any one; but as soon as he got off the track himself, he began to blame everybody. The crookeder a man can make other people look, the straighter he thinks he is himself. The prophet's excuse was that nobody else was in line of battle where they ought to be, and that he was the only loyal man on the ground. Ask the first man you meet why there is n't a revival in his Church, and he will tell you that it is the preacher's fault, or else it is because there is trouble in the choir, or somebody is in a squabble, or there is no life in the prayer-meeting, or something of the sort. Anything to shield himself from personal responsibility. The new preacher never puts much dependence in the man who calls at the parsonage before the carpet has been tacked down, to say that for years the whole Church has been resting on his shoulders.

But how differently God deals with our faults from what men would do! David was wise when he said, "Let me fall into the hands of God rather than of men." If we had to be judged by one another, no sinner would ever get to heaven. When a man tries a man and finds him weak or faithless, he is done with him; but God always gives him another chance.

The eye of love never stops at the surface. It looks into the heart. Elijah did n't need to make any excuses to God. God knew more about him than he knew about himself, and made him forget all about himself and his past troubles by giving him a new piece of work to look after. As long as a man can be kept busy for God, the devil does n't stand much of a chance with him. There is a hint here that some pastors might profit by. If you have anybody in your flock who is in danger of slipping, put them where they will have to work with all their might to help hold somebody else up. The man who works for others is sure to be made strong himself by the effort. The best way to make a man respect himself is to show him that you believe in him, by intrusting to him responsible duties. Whenever God lifts a man up, he gives him something important to attend to; and if all of our Churches would follow the same plan, there would be more revivals and less backsliding.

How thankful we ought to be to God, that in setting before us the instruments with whom he has accomplished such wonderful things in the past, he has told us about their failures as well as about their victories! It somehow gives us all strength and hope to find out that they were about the same kind of people we see all about us in the present time. It would discourage us from ever doing very much if we were sure God had to have perfect people to work with.

God showed himself decidedly in favor of itinerancy by the way he handled Elijah from the beginning. He knew his man too well to try to

keep him in the same place all the time. He moved him around, and by so doing ground down some of his rough corners, and made a success of him. Elijah in one place all his life would very likely have been a failure. A good many men fail because they never get into the right business. Boys have been ruined because they had to stay at home and turn the grindstone when they should have been allowed to go fishing. To have to hoe the same row over and over every day takes all the poetry out of life, and kills the good angel in many people. A change of scene often makes the blood redder and the heart beat stronger. There is nothing like it for discouraged people. A preacher who sometimes falls down flat in one Church will flourish like a palm-tree in another. Mark was n't much account with Paul, but he got along fine with Barnabas. Had Elijah been sent back to Jezreel, it may be that he would never have been carried to heaven in the fiery chariot; and, by the way, what a blessed thing it was that he was n't lifted up into glory from the top of Mt. Carmel! He would have been so puffed up that perhaps it might have been difficult for the angels to get along pleasantly with him. But be sure to notice this: As long as God made his appointments for him, Elijah's ministry was a great success; but as soon as he took them into his own hands he was a failure, and remained so until he got back to absolute trust in God again.

When God wants the census of his people taken, he will not trust any living man to do it, because there is no place on earth high enough from which to look into the heart and find out the truth. When

God wants to know how much real salt there is in the earth, he does n't go to ministerial reports to find out. "Forty accessions, mostly adults," sometimes attracts no attention at all in heaven, while at other times the streets of glory are made to ring with joy because some sinner, who has been a Church member for twenty years, has at last repented. Elijah thought he stood alone in the midst of a great multitude of backsliders, every man of whom was loyal to his Master; and if it was possible for this man, who had been for years having such remarkable experiences with God, how much more are we in the present time all likely to be mistaken, when we undertake to go around in the community and number the Lord's own! Think of this whenever you are tempted to believe that the devil is having things all his own way in your Church or in your community.

CHAPTER IV.

PRINCIPALLY FOR PREACHERS.

THE sermon that does n't open a window in heaven for somebody is a failure.

No one who loves as Christ loved can live in this world without making it better.

The moment God pronounces a man all right, the devil begins to throw mud at him.

The man who is working for Christ is doing something that angels would like to do.

Remember that nobody can have any better things in the future than you can have.

Whenever God does anything for man to look at, he does it with a very humble instrument.

The stronger the devil's forces are in your neighborhood, the more God needs faithfulness in you.

Preachers never forget that people have heads, but a good many of them forget that they have hearts.

The preacher who works only for visible results will not attract much attention on the judgment-day.

People who have never shed a tear of sympathy need a good deal of preaching to make them believe there is a heaven to go to.

We may not all be eloquent, but we can all be earnest.

God can use a weak man, but he won't use a lazy one.

He who merely preaches grandly does not preach the gospel.

The preacher who always aims at the head will never hit the heart.

Men who preach altogether to the head, soon get tired in the heart.

A preacher can probably do more good with less money than any other man on earth.

The man who is never convicted by his own preaching does not preach the gospel.

We need more preaching that will either make people get converted or get out of the Church.

If you want to have sinners converted to God, be sure to preach to those in your congregation.

The bones of a man who starved to death doing his best for God would be a wonderful curiosity

Not one person in ten thousand can remember a great sermon, but nobody can forget an act of kindness.

We need religion that will make men pay their debts, a thousand times more than we need more shouting at camp-meeting.

Many preachers who are always discussing the question, "Shall we know each other there?" pass their next-door neighbors in the street without speaking.

Christ preached his own life and lived his own sermon.

The pastor who lives only in his study will be dead in his pulpit.

You can't warm other people while your own heart is freezing.

If we had more good hearers, there would be more good sermons.

The best sermons are not always those which are preached in the pulpit.

The fear of criticism makes many a man live on lower ground than God wants him to.

If you want a revival, preach repentance, and begin by taking aim with your longest gun at the front seats.

Whenever you go to a sinner, go with the thought that God wants him, and has sent you to bring him to him.

There would be more power in the Church if there were not so many blemished sheep offered at the altar of sacrifice.

A pastor has to live very close to the Lord who can preach the gospel as faithfully to the rich as he does to the poor of his flock.

The protracted meeting in which the members of the pastor's family take no interest, is not apt to develop into much of a revival.

The preacher who faithfully preaches Christ and him crucified, will not have to look into the dictionary to find out the meaning of the word "crucified."

You can't tire the man whom Christ has rested.

The only cares that hurt us are those we try to keep.

Troubles open doors in the heart for God to come in.

Faith and works are twins who never quarrel and fight.

Love never looks at the clock before it takes off its coat to go work.

Shoot where God tells you to aim, and you will always hit something.

Better live in a house without windows than in a house without books.

Nobody ever denies that there is a devil except the devil's own friends.

The prayers that we are proud of never receive any attention in heaven.

The man who follows Christ will always be a leader to somebody else.

The devil can't run fast enough to keep up with the man who walks with God.

It does n't take much of a Christian to praise the Lord when the sun is shining.

The best preacher is the one who comes the closest to living his own preaching.

If head-preaching could save the world, the devil would have been used up long ago.

Wherever the Word of God is preached in purity, people will be found who would like to stone the preacher.

Constant trust gives constant strength.

The devil is afraid of a united Church.

The time to pray for a revival is all the time.

There is a good deal of gospel in the right kind of a hand-shake.

Whenever God gives us a burden to carry, it is to make us stronger.

Drive the devil out of the family, and he will have no home anywhere.

The nearer a man gets to God, the more the devil likes to tempt him.

Putting it into a worldly sweat is not God's way of warming up a Church.

The devil could not take Christ high enough to show him anything beyond this world.

Self-conceited people are very apt to think they can get along without any help from the Lord.

If you know that you are a child of God, stop working for your board. "All things are yours."

If we had no trouble but real troubles, there wouldn't be a round-shouldered man in the world.

Make your mistakes teach you something. Moses never lost his temper in the wilderness but once.

If nobody has ever got mad at your preaching, shut up your Bible and quit. You are in the wrong business.

The man who does not ask God for the salvation of the whole world every time he gets down on his knees, does n't ask him for anything.

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A good sermon will always outlive the preacher.

God is not in the revival that winds up with a Church entertainment.

A good way to learn how to move mountains is to begin on grains of sand.

When the last hypocrite dies, the devil will not own a foot of ground on earth.

The man who preaches for bread and butter never gets the Bible clear open.

God does n't care how weak a man may be in the legs, if he is only strong in the heart.

The man who speaks the truth in love will always speak words that weigh something.

The best preacher is the one who keeps right on living his sermon after he comes out of the pulpit.

There are things that look much better from heaven than a milk-wagon at a preacher's door on Sunday morning.

When you want to reach the masses with your preaching, do n't get up in the church-steeple to write your sermons.

The man who is trusting in God does n't have to look into his pocket-book to see whether he ought to be happy or not.

The time when God needs you the most is when the devil seems to be having things his own way in your neighborhood.

One reason why there are not more revivals is because so little of the preaching is aimed at the sins of the people who are listening to the preacher.

To have an honest critic is to have a faithful friend.

No disaster can come to the man whose will has been swallowed up in God's will.

It isn't often people will leave the church while the preacher is preaching Christ.

Find a man who is moving the world, and you will find a man who believes in something. A man on the fence has no moral weight.

You can't tell how much a preacher is doing for the Lord by the size of his salary.

Tearing a leaf out of the Bible is about the same as throwing away the whole book.

No man can get very much of an education without going to school to his mistakes.

No matter where you open your Bible and discover the purpose of God, you will find the devil working with all his might to defeat it.

The devil set Christ on a high pinnacle of the temple, but the Church of to-day is full of preachers who are trying to climb up there themselves.

Had John the Baptist refused to preach until he could get into a church with stained-glass windows, the world might not yet have heard that it had a Savior.

Every man in the pulpit has more to preach than John the Baptist had. He had only a coming Christ to proclaim, but we can preach him crucified and risen again.

There are people who think if they stand on the river-bank and throw a straw to a drowning man, they have done enough. Such are the people who give twenty-five cents a year toward missions.

The gold-plating on a wire does not make it any stronger.

Too many pulpits are painted fires instead of burning ones.

God has n't much use for the man who does all his work with his mouth.

If you want to find out how much meanness there is in a man, go at him with a collection-basket.

The devil doesn't know what to make of the man whom he can't scare into Egypt by the fear of a famine.

If some preachers would n't try to do so much themselves, God could do more for their congregations.

Trying to hit little sinners by shooting over the heads of big ones, is a poor way to carry on gospel warfare.

The main reason why many preachers do not have gospel results is because they do not do gospel preaching.

There are preachers who never ask the Lord for any kind of a revival except that which will make a big show on paper.

People only go to the theater because they do not hear the gospel preached in demonstration of the Spirit and with power.

The world needs ministerial backbone a good deal more than it needs higher steeples on the churches, or bigger organs behind the pulpits.

Lambs and sheep never stand on their hind-legs to eat.

No man can preach an inch higher than his own experience.

It is bad for the lambs when there is a giraffe in the pulpit.

A live preacher and a dead Church are hard to keep together.

The days are always too short for the man who loves his work.

If you get into the place God wants you to have, nobody can put you out of it.

Some ministers fail because they preach about Christ, instead of preaching him.

The man who strikes at sin wherever he finds it, will be sure to stir up the hornets.

If able preaching alone could have saved the world, God would have sent some of his angels to do it.

When you want to hit a genteel sinner with gospel shot, don't shoot at his plug-hat, but aim at his heart.

The preacher who takes Christ into the pulpit with him, will be sure to preach a sermon that will help somebody.

When the devil gets a chance to pick out a preacher for a Church, he always sends one who does n't believe in revivals.

Before you can ever become a giant for God, you must first find out that without him you are nothing more than a grasshopper.

Sympathy is something that can not be learned at college.

The best way to preach Christ is to preach what he preached.

A wide-awake preacher is pretty sure to keep his Church from going to sleep.

For a steady thing, the light of a tallow-dip is better than that of a sky-rocket.

The preacher who is always behind will soon have a congregation just like him.

If you want to keep the sky clear, get in the habit of looking at it through the goodness of God.

About the most glorious thing that can happen to any preacher is to have a hard time for Christ's sake.

If you want to lift your people very much, you must have hold of God's hand when you make the effort.

Preachers can be found who would make a good many changes in the plan of salvation, if they could.

The preacher who can tell the sinner that God loves him will never have to advertise in the newspapers to get a congregation.

If you try to get men to understand the gospel, you will fail; but if you preach it with a heart on fire with love for their souls, you will succeed.

If your object is simply to deliver a lecture course, win applause, and make money, elegant moral essays will do; but if you want to save souls and please your Master, they won't.

You can't point to the cross with a frown on your face.

If brains could have saved the world, the work would have been finished long ago.

You may not be able to get people to read the Bible, but you can make them read you.

The preacher fails who tries to preach a doctrine that has n't been tested in his own heart.

The world is not suffering so much for want of more preaching as it is for more practice.

It is easier to run an engine without fire than it is to keep up a Church without a prayer-meeting.

There are so many people who think they ought to help the Lord to keep the preacher humble.

If you can't find a hot iron to strike, strike hard enough and often enough to make the iron hot.

Hundreds of promising revivals are killed because somebody gets in too big a hurry to have them over with.

The pastor who tries to carry his Church to heaven on his shoulders will be sure to drop the most of it.

Christ came to seek and to save the lost. We are not walking in his footsteps unless we are trying to do the same thing.

The best help we can give to those who are trying to get to heaven is to keep squarely in the middle of the road ourselves.

The people who fear God most are least afraid of men.

The right kind of a man is never hurt any by persecution.

God's bread is always sweeter than the devil's plum-pudding.

Some of the organ's sweetest notes come from pipes that can not be seen.

On the very day that the first Church was started the devil produced a hypocrite.

There is no account given anywhere in the Bible of the conversion of a hypocrite.

Going down low to work for Christ seems very high up from where angels look.

Feeling like a grasshopper is the best kind of preparation for whipping a giant.

Nothing but grace can keep a gifted man from falling in love with his own head.

No man filled with the Holy Ghost, ever has to preach very long to empty benches.

The devil loves to see preachers quarreling about water, and saying nothing against whisky.

When you are praying for a revival that will stay, do n't insist on having it come in your way.

The richest man is not the one who has the most gold laid up, but the one who is trusting most in God.

The devil never throws any stones at the preacher who is trying to prove that salvation begins and ends with the head.

The real man of God is always showing people how to be like God.

The right kind of prayer always holds out both hands to receive the answer.

The less religion there is in a Church, the more oysters and ice-cream it takes to run it.

When a man is praying for a corn-crop, God loves to see him say amen to it with a hoe.

Job never made money any faster than he did when the devil had him flat on his back.

The pastor's preaching never makes anybody want any more religion than the pastor possesses.

The only man who can convince others that the Bible is true is the one who knows in his own soul that it is.

The food of John the Baptist was locusts and wild honey. God always gives his loved ones something sweet.

When a man tells you that he believes in a God too good to send people into everlasting punishment, tell him you believe in One who is too good to pen up saints and devils forever together.

CHAPTER V.

A SERMON ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

THE first word in the Lord's Prayer gives the death-blow to all selfishness. It is not "My Father," but "Our Father"—your Father as well as mine. This means that the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man must go together. Before we can have God for our Father we must be willing to receive all men for our brethren. God will not come into the heart unless he can bring everybody else with him. No man on this earth can pray for himself, and leave you and me out. He must say, "Our Father," and that will take us all in. Religion is not something that we can take home and keep solely for our own use. Unless we get enough to have some for everybody, we can't keep any. It must be "Our Father" every moment of our lives; not only in church, but on the street, in business, on the railroad, and in the street-cars. The man who does not say "Our Father" in his conduct wherever he goes, can not say it on his knees. No man can keep hold of the hand of God while he steps on the rights of another man. To say "Our Father" in our hearts, means that we want all the world for Christ, and that we are willing to toil and pray, and suffer and make sacrifices, to help secure it. No man can say "Our Father" in earnest without being a soldier ready for immediate duty any-

where in God's army. "Our Father" is all the prayer we need to save the whole world, if we could but say it with our hearts. "Our Father" means that wherever we see a man, God has intended that he should be something to us, and we to him—no matter how high he may stand, or how low he has fallen.

Henry Moorehouse, the sweet-spirited boy who is said to have taught D. L. Moody how to preach, said, in one of his Bible-talks: "One day I kneeled down beside a British lord, and he said, 'Our Father,' and I said, 'Our Father;' and immediately that lord and I were brothers. But another day I kneeled down again, and this time it was beside a poor beggar. The beggar said, 'Our Father,' and I said, 'Our Father;' and at once the beggar and I became brothers."

That's the idea! We must be willing to say "Brother" with our hearts to every man before we can have the right to call God our Father. There are no small families in the kingdom of God. God is so great that he can take the whole human race up in his arms; but he will never lift us up as long as we insist that somebody else shall first come down. The man who will not raise his hand to bring salvation to the heathen will never get any nearer to glory than the suburbs of heaven. "Our Father" means, "O God, save everybody!" or it doesn't mean anything.

"Our Father which art in heaven." A Father with a home into which he will some day gather his children in a great reunion. Every Christian ought continually to have before him the thought

that he is away from home, but that some day he will rejoice forever with all his brethren in his Father's house. Whenever you go to a sinner, go with the thought that Father wants him to come home and sit down at the feast which is never to end. Salvation means more than to have peace and joy in this life. It means to be expected in the home of God, and to have a special mansion prepared and waiting for you there. To have a Father in heaven, means to have a right to the Tree of Life which stands in the midst of the paradise of God. The greatest right which any child can have is to have a place in the father's house. Brother, if you can say "Our Father" in spirit and in truth, you have an inheritance that is bound with the cords of love to the throne of God; and no matter how poor you may be in this life, some day you will wear a crown that will outshine the sun.

"Hallowed be Thy name." This means worship, and is the first thing we ought to do when we would come into God's presence. Without worship no prayer can have any real meaning in it. Honored, revered, respected, beloved be Thy name, ought to be the never-ending song of the heart. In every way in which I can bring honor upon the name of God, I must be anxious that it shall be done. One of the most glorious thoughts that can come to the mind is that we may each one be something and do something to bring honor to the name of God. "Hallowed be Thy name" ought to be continually going up like burning incense from every Christian life. No matter what happens, let me endure it or do it as Christ would do it, ought

to get into the morning prayer of every one of his disciples on earth. If I am to rejoice, let everybody know that my joy comes from God. If I am to prosper, let it be a prosperity that will help me to make his name glorious to some poor soul. If I am to suffer, let it be so that those about me may see that I have gold in me that has come from God. "Hallowed be Thy name." The quickest way to get rich is to learn to honor the name of God. It isn't hard to get along with a man who never thinks or acts and leaves God out. Chapters might be written to show how we can honor the name of God. It would be well if every Christian would daily ask the Holy Spirit this question. We can honor him in our own souls by doing nothing that will cause us to lose our self-respect. We can honor him by searching the Scriptures in a prayerful spirit, to learn his will concerning us. We can honor him by shunning temptation and avoiding all appearance of evil. We can honor him by talking of his goodness and testifying of his faithfulness to us. We can honor him by making it the first business of life to belong to him. We can honor him by being cheerful in our gifts and service, and we can honor him by making the house in which we worship him cheerful and attractive. The church ought to be a beautiful place, and every member ought to have something to do in making it so. A stingy man is all the time telling the world that his God is just like him. No man has much of a God who never brings any but little gifts to church.

I have tried to preach in some Churches where I felt that it was almost a slander on the name of

God to open his word in the midst of such surroundings. Windows and benches broken. Smoky stoves, dirty floors, and walls in the same condition. Dingy lamps, no carpets, and even the amen corner looking like a pig-sty. Would you judge from such a looking house of worship that God had many friends in that neighborhood? I have heard well-to-do men pray that God would bless the whole earth, who would n't give a dollar to build a fence around the Church to keep the pigs out of the graveyard, and yet to have told them that they had n't learned the alphabet of religion would have made them get angry in a hurry.

"Thy kingdom come." The moment God's name is really honored in the soul, this petition naturally springs up in the heart. No real child of God ever wants to go to heaven alone. He wants everybody to go along with him. This part of the prayer means an open Bible and ringing church-bells everywhere. It does n't mean that charity stays at home, but that it goes everywhere in the name of God and for God. It means that I am ready to take off my coat, and go to work with all my might to help make roads for the coming of the King all over the earth. "Thy kingdom come" in my own heart, to begin with. My first duty to God is to give myself to him, soul and body, and all that I am or ever may be, houses and lands and gold and silver not excepted. "Thy kingdom come" means that we want this whole earth taken for our God and his Christ. It means that we want the Bible translated into every tongue, and churches and school-houses everywhere. It means that, as long as there is a

heathen anywhere on the face of the earth, we intend to do something to try to get the gospel to him. "Thy kingdom come," not only in my own heart and my own family and my own Church, but thy kingdom come wherever there is a soul that knows not God. And when I pray to God it means that I am pledging him that I will do everything in my power to help bring about the things I am asking for. If I am not willing to do this, I had better not get down on my knees, for there is no prayer in what I say. The words of my lips do not come from the heart, and are the basest kind of mockery. Like Cain, I stand at an altar upon which there is not a single drop of blood, and would n't be there if I did n't expect to make something by it. Unless I am willing to help answer my own prayer, I do not pray; and to say, "Thy kingdom come," means this world for Christ, or it does not mean anything.

I heard of a man who, at his family altar, prayed very eloquently that God would help a poor man who lived just across the street. He was out of work, and his wife and two of the children were sick, and there was no bread in the house. In his prayer the well-to-do brother told the Lord all about how bad off his neighbor was, and asked him to do everything for him that he needed. As he arose from his knees, his little son, seven or eight years old, went up to him, and said:

"Papa, give me your pocket-book, and I'll go and answer every bit of your prayer myself."

There is getting to be altogether too much of that kind of praying. There are thousands of prom-

ises in the Bible, but not one of them covers a case like that. God's work never begins until man's work has been done. If the heathen are never saved, it will be the fault of stingy, close-fisted Church members, and not the fault of God. The angels have orders to throw every window in heaven wide open as soon as all the tithes have been brought into the storehouse; but there is no promise that a single blessing shall fall until this has been done.

If your Church needs a revival and does n't get it, it means that somebody has been robbing God, and perhaps it may have been you. Your income last year was two thousand dollars, and you gave twenty-five cents to help send the gospel to the heathen, because your name was going to be published in the Conference Minutes. When God's work comes to a stand-still, you can depend upon it that obstacles are in the way which human hands can remove, and the chariot of the Lord will not move on until they have been taken away.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." No man can be indifferent on any subject that concerns God with that prayer in his heart. He can't walk past a saloon every day in the year, and never once ask himself if there is n't something that he can do to help put a stop to the awful traffic. He can't see people rushing headlong to destruction all around him, without asking himself and God if there is n't something he can do to help save some of them. He can't pick up a sensational newspaper which is full of the devil's bait for the young, and read it through before he goes to Church on Sunday morning, and have no wish rise up in his heart that

such baneful literature shall be suppressed. No man who really prays that prayer can sit down and fold his hands, and try to loaf his way to heaven. He does not cry under the sermon on Sunday and laugh at the theater on prayer-meeting night. He does not have his name on the Church-book and his feet in the devil's paths. He does not deed his property to his wife, and live on money that belongs to his creditors. He does not boast of his good deeds, or expect to go to heaven because he has never been in jail. He does not turn his property over to an agent, with a wink that means that he can rent it for immoral purposes if the security is good and the price big enough. He is not the man who tries to break up the Church to which he belongs as soon as he finds out he can't run it. He does not travel on Sunday when it can possibly be avoided, nor does he give his influence to things that the devil does not object to. To say, "Thy will be done," means to consent that God shall have his way about everything, and that we are going to do all that we can to help bring about that blessed result. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Would you talk about your neighbors in heaven? Would you be envious if somebody else should have a little finer mansion than you? Would it make you feel spiteful to see somebody else get a little nearer to the throne than you could do? If our hearts can not pray this part of the prayer without rebellion, let us keep on going to God until they can.

"Give us this day our daily bread." Not bread for to-morrow, or next month, or next year, but

bread for to-day. God does n't want any of his children to live on stale bread. He wants us to come to him every day, and get our bread fresh from his hand. He wants us to realize that our dependence upon him is constant and continual. He wants to have us always talking to him about the things we need, just as we like to have our children do with us. It is trying to take this matter all into our own hands, and get our bread too far ahead without any regard to God, that fills the world with sorrow and crime. The man who robs a bank would not do it if he made this plea his daily prayer. The whisky-seller, and the gambler, and the forger, and the harlot, turn their faces toward the pit because they do not look to God for their daily bread. The man who asks God for his daily bread will not engage in any occupation to get it upon which he can not ask the Divine favor. Notice that this plea does not come first. If it did, there would be selfishness in the prayer. It would mean, "O Lord, no matter what else you do, take care of me!" But coming where it does, you worship God, and pray for everybody else first. Before you ask him to put flour in your barrel, you ask him to give salvation to the whole world. Before you ask him for your dinner, you ask him to give you a spirit of submission and thankfulness with which to eat it. To pray this prayer makes us also industrious, prudent, and thoughtful. No loafer can offer this petition. It will make us active in both hand and mind, because, as previously stated, no man can really pray who will not help God to answer.

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” This part of the prayer is an awful petition to make, unless we do it in the spirit of mercy. It is the only petition in the prayer that is based upon our own course of action. If I come to God with a hard heart, I have no claim upon his mercy. I can not be taken to his arms as long as I refuse to shake hands with my brother. To keep any man out of my heart will keep out God, and keep me out of heaven. I must first forgive before I can be forgiven. If I have an unforgiving spirit, God can not forgive me without rewarding me for being a rebel against his government. As long as I voluntarily remain in sin I must be treated as a sinner, or God can not maintain his justice. Let vice be rewarded by Omnipotence, and what is to become of virtue? Therefore, whenever I pray this prayer I am practically telling my Heavenly Father that I want him to deal with me exactly as I do with my fellow-creatures. If I have anger in my heart against my brother, I am not praying for mercy at all, but I am asking God to bestow his wrath upon me. What I am really saying is: “Lord, my heart is full of malice and hatred, and my prayer is that your heart shall be just like that toward me.” This part of the prayer our Savior himself commented upon, and said: “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” And he also said: “If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and

offer thy gift." If this means anything at all, it means that we can not be right with God as long as we are wrong with any of his children. It is not a question of who was to blame to begin with. We are to blame if we are not right with him now. It is a question of obedience to God's law. God says there must be peace in the family, and if we will not do our part toward maintaining it we must go out, and stay out, until we are willing to come in on our knees.

The greatest of all troubles with the Church to-day is, that it is full of people who can not kneel down together and repeat this prayer from the heart. Christ was betrayed by one of his own disciples, and was wounded to the death in the house of his friends; and the same thing is still taking place. Two old saints who get their backs up at one another, and keep them there like a couple of stubborn children, can hurt the cause of God as much as any saloon in the town. A team or two of that kind, plowing for the devil, will give him a chance to raise a big crop anywhere. All of Satan's troops in the community can't prevent the coming of a revival, but the smallest kind of a Church fuss will. In nearly every Church there are sensible, well-meaning people who have misunderstandings with each other; and instead of sitting down together and going over the ground in brotherly love before sundown, as the Lord commands them to do, and getting the enmity all out of their hearts before it has a chance to take root and flourish, they go to bed mad, get up that way, and keep on going that way, until they almost wreck the Church. In God's

name, let us begin to have as much sense in religious matters as we have in most other things! Let us stop being children, fussing about worthless toys, pouting because we can't have our own way, and let us begin to be men and women with backbone enough to do right, even if it does hurt our pride to do it.

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." There is no use in asking God for anything else until you can make that your prayer without feeling something cold come into your heart as you think of somebody you can't fellowship with. You enjoy the preaching first-rate sometimes, and have a very pleasant time in the social meetings, until he or she comes in, and then the meeting is dead, because you have put your ear to the devil's telephone. The old grudge must come out of the heart before there can be a comfortable place at the table of the Lord. "Leave there thy gift, and first be reconciled with thy brother." God will give you all the time you need, but you must give your brother the gold.

But how are we to be reconciled with a brother who won't let us? Go at him in God's way, and he can't help himself. Love never fails. Pray for him until you get your heart so full of love it will almost kill him, to get near you. If your pride stands in the way of this, there is something wrong with your religion. It is not a safe kind to step on when you have to walk out into eternity. God never tells us to do the impossible, and he commands us to love our enemies. He does n't require us to love their ways, but he makes it imperative

that we shall love their welfare ; and when we truly do this we can not cherish enmity against them. If we need Divine help to enable us to do this, God is under obligations to give it.

In illustration of this point, let me tell you how a friend of mine used up an enemy in the Lord's way. There was a man who belonged to the same Church that he did, who was not friendly to him—a man who talked about him, and spoke slightly of his religion. There was no cause that he knew of why this brother should behave so. He had nothing but good-will in his heart for him, and it pained him that there should be anything but the best of Christian feeling between them. He tried to pray for this man, but it almost choked him to do it. He had the name of being an out-and-out hypocrite, and he believed that he was. He tried with all his might to love him, but found he could n't do it. When he made this discovery, he took the matter to the Lord in earnest, and said: "Lord, you have commanded me to love that man, and to save my life I can't do it. I can't see anything about him to love; and now, Lord, you will have to help me, by making him lovable. Show me something good about him—make him good, make him true."

Day after day the earnest brother kept on praying for the man he could n't love; and the more he prayed, the more in earnest he became about it. As he prayed he seemed to see the smallness and meanness in the man's heart that was eating into his very life, and the first thing he knew a feeling of the most tender compassion for the unfortunate

one was born within him. He pitied him, and prayed all the more earnestly for him. The next thing he seemed to realize was, that the man was fighting against great odds, trying to overcome principalities and powers which those about him knew not of; and then, as he continued to pray, there seemed to be a streak of golden good come out in the man that he had never seen before; and the more he prayed, the brighter and wider the streak became. One day he met the man in the street, and rushed up to him, and shook hands with a cordiality that surprised him. Whenever and wherever he met him after that, this treatment was repeated, until it became indeed coals of fire upon his enemy's head, who would sometimes see him coming and try to get away from him; but he would always run him down, and get him by the hand, and say in the kindest manner: "Why, Brother So-and-so, how do you do to-day? How are you? How are all the folks?"

With that course of treatment, it didn't take him long to take all the enmity out of the man, and cause him to stop running away, and to come toward him whenever they met. Enemies are the best kind of timber to make friends out of, if you will only go at them in the Lord's way. No man is fool enough to be against you when he finds out that you are really and truly his friend.

At one place where I was talking on this subject, I met a member of the Church the next day, who told me that he thought I had preached pretty good gospel the day before, but that it wouldn't always work. When I asked him why he thought

so, he said: "While you were talking, there was a man in the Church that I have n't spoken to for fourteen years. He took advantage of me in business, and I told him so in plain English; and we have n't had any use for one another since then. I made up my mind I would bury the hatchet, and make up with him; and so, as the audience was passing out, I managed to meet him face to face, and put out my hand to shake hands with him. He turned his back on me, and would n't make up. It sounds nice in a sermon, but it won't always work," he continued, shaking his head with a far-away look.

"But let us see about it," said I, as he turned to pass on. "Before you condemn the doctor, let us see whether you took all the medicine, and according to directions. You prayed for the man, of course, and—"

"Well, no," he said, "I did n't do that. The fact is, I was in such a hurry to get to him that I never once thought of that."

Never try to make the devil run without first getting on your knees and staying there until you get strong enough to do it. If you do n't do this, there will be sure to be a disaster.

There may be rare instances, perhaps, where you may not be able to make a good friend out of a bad enemy; but in all such cases you will have a glorious opportunity to testify for Christ, because you can so carry yourself as to compel him to confess to his own soul that he is bogus while you are a true disciple of the Savior.

"And lead us." I believe we ought to stop right here, and claim God for our leader before we.

go another step. Lead us in our business. Lead us in our Christian life. Lead us in our giving and in our keeping. Lead us at home and when we are abroad. Lead us when we are tried, perplexed, and tempted. Lead us when we are in danger of making mistakes and of doing foolish things. Lead us when we are threatened with indifference, and when likely to become over-zealous. Lead us in devotion, in worship, and in service. Whenever we need a leader, be thou our Leader. Help us to be willing and watchful followers; for to be led implies that we go willingly. The Good Shepherd never drives his sheep to pasture. His sheep know his voice. He calls them by name, and they follow him. A stranger they will not follow. "And lead us." We can ask this with confidence, for he has promised to do it. In his Word he has said: "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way in which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye."

"Not into temptation." Parents like to have their children tell them where they would like to go,—to the parks, in the beautiful streets, and to places that are attractive; not in the narrow streets and dark places. When we enter the city by railroad, we would like to go up a beautiful, broad avenue, lined with flowers, and lawns, and fountains. We don't want to have to look into unattractive back yards and unsightly places; but it has to be done sometimes before we can get to the end of our journey. And it is so in real life. There are trials, and temptations, and afflictions, and sick-

nesses from which we naturally shrink, but which we can not escape. We can ask the Father to lead us not into these; but if we find that we must pass through them, we know that his loving eye can see the beautiful city beyond, and will at last bring us safely to it; and when at length we come to rejoice in it, the way by which we have come will make it all the dearer. Sometimes parents have to be severe with their children to teach them lessons which must be learned; but they do not love them any the less, and would gladly spare them if they could. Very often God also has to do this with his children; and when I come to this part of the prayer, I like to pray that I may be very willing, very attentive, very teachable, very obedient, and quick to learn all the paths into which the Heavenly Hand would lead me, so that my Heavenly Father can be as gentle with me as his great heart of love would lead him to be.

"But deliver us from evil." What does that mean? The new version has it right. It says: "Deliver us from the evil one." That means, deliver us from the devil. Deliver us from all Satanic influences. Deliver us from the snares and wiles of the enemy. Give us the victory over the powers, principalities, and rulers of darkness, against which we have to fight. It is my opinion that the Church would not be so badly off to-day if more attention were given to this part of the prayer. I don't think I ever heard a minister publicly pray that God would deliver us from the devil. When closely analyzed, it will be found that the great thought in the prayer of Christ for his disciples and the Church was, that

they might be delivered from evil. It may be that the devil would never have been permitted to lay a finger on Job if he had asked God for deliverance from him. There is nothing to show that he ever did this, and the chances are that he did not. By every means God tries to teach us to depend upon him, and to make his strength ours. He has legions of angels in waiting to help us in spiritual matters, just as the sun, moon, all the stars, the earth, and the atmosphere are always ready to help the man who wants to raise a corn-crop; but he has got to ask God to direct them to do it, by putting himself in the proper attitude.

“Deliver us from evil.” Let us never forget to pray it. The devil is always on hand in some shape or another. He never stays away on rainy Sundays. Bad weather won't keep him from coming. I wish we could get all our members to attend Church as regularly as Satan does. He came with the sons of God in the time of Job, and he has kept right on coming ever since. God deliver us from the devil. You can't begin to talk about building a church but what the devil will be sure to find out about it, and try to have something to say about it from the very beginning. It will be a wonder if he doesn't get into the Board of Trustees, and raise a row before the ground is picked out. It will be just like him, too, to want to have his say about how the money shall be raised. As soon as the church is ready to be dedicated, he will be on the ground. He will pick out a good seat near the front, and from that time on he will be on hand as often as the preacher is. You can't depend on anything or anybody as

long as the devil is loose. He will get into the best man in the Church, and the best woman, too, for that matter. He will get into the Official Board in more ways than one, and will have a place on every committee appointed by the pastor. He will at times get into the leading brother and the leading sister. He will get into the elders, and deacons, and ushers, the stewards, and the class-leaders. He will get into the superintendent of the Sabbath-school, and will make all kinds of trouble among the teachers. He will get into the janitor and the ventilation, and will make everybody uncomfortable or sleepy. He will get into the choir-leader, the singers, the music, the organist, the organ itself, and the boy who does the pumping. Yes, and sometimes he will get right square upon the platform, and get into the very preacher himself. May the Lord deliver us from the devil!

I do n't know that I have missed anybody; but if I have, they are the very ones who had better begin to pray for deliverance. I do n't mean to say that the evil spirit actually dwells in any of these good people; but what I mean is, that he manages, in various ways, to make them instruments for carrying out his purposes, just as a man, of whom I read the other day, when quarreling with his wife, jerked down a "God bless our Home" from the parlor wall, and hit her over the head with it. The sentiment was all right. There was nothing wrong about it, but the wrong kind of a spirit had hold of the frame which contained it. And in a similar way the devil manages, by force of circumstances, to very often get his hands on a good many well-meaning Church

members. Let us never fail to pray for deliverance from every Satanic influence.

“For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen!” For Thine *is* the kingdom—not going to be some time, but is *now*, and the King is our Father, and he wants to give us all the things we have been asking for a great deal more than we want him to do it, because his eye can follow them into eternity and know what they mean, as we can not. And the power is his—power to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think; and not for a day only, but forever. And the glory is his—the transfiguration of the kingdom and the power—the privilege, the desire, and the joy, to open every window in heaven to rain blessings upon his obedient children.

Let us now say altogether, and say it with our hearts full of gratitude for the privilege, as we have never done before: “OUR FATHER, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen!”

CHAPTER VI.

SPEAR-POINTS AND ARROW-TIPS.

THE man who is always looking for mud never sees the sky.

Everything sin has caused in the human race, it may cause in you.

The man who has a high opinion of himself does n't know himself.

When we fully believe God, his word for anything is all we want.

The man who is always thinking evil finds ten thousand ways to speak it.

A poor man's all is greater in the sight of God than a rich man's millions.

A dusty Bible and a sleepy Christian are generally found pretty close together.

When we have done our prayerful best, God is responsible for what happens.

If you conclude to keep your sins to-day, you may have to keep them forever.

God's children work because they love to, and the devil's because they have to.

If the devil could be kept away from the children, it would n't be long until he would lose his kingdom.

You can not get more light from God, unless you are walking in the light already given.

If you want to have power to mold other men, learn to control the man who wears your hat.

By not being a Christian yourself, you make it that much harder for everybody else to be one.

Every man who loves his neighbor as himself, has something in his heart that God put there.

When we get to heaven it will surprise us to find out how small the world looks from there.

A good many children hate the Church because their parents are only pious in pleasant weather.

Some people's lives are like warm water on a hot day; nice to look at, but one taste is enough.

There is no mansion in heaven for the man who treats his wife like a mule, and expects her to be an angel.

The man who sells whisky to his neighbor pays an awful price for doing it. It costs him the favor of God.

If none of your neighbors seem to have much religion, it is a sure sign that you need more yourself.

If people would stop looking toward the wrong place, they would find it a great deal easier to stay in the right place.

There are men who will walk five miles to lead a prayer-meeting, simply because they enjoy being at the head of the procession; but when somebody is wanted to sit up with the sick or help the needy, they are suddenly missing.

The devil trembles when a good man prays.

A bad egg takes up as much room as a good one.

If we could know all, we could forgive more easily.

We are all the time making character, whether we are doing anything else or not.

We are not ignorant because we do not learn, but because we forget so much.

If every mother was a Christian, the devil would never have the courage to show himself.

That Church is in a splendid condition where a long prayer won't kill a prayer-meeting.

It is going to the world for shoe-strings that keeps the Church from being sure-footed.

The quickest way to become convinced that there is a devil is to try to live a Christian.

We must glorify God in the little things as well as in the great ones. The soldier preparing for inspection must burnish his buttons as well as his musket.

Men are always trying to turn their money into something else ; but when people get religion, they know they have the best thing on earth, and do n't want to part with it.

Not to give your own life to Christ means to take somebody else's life. No man can choose either hell or heaven for himself alone. In a recent fire at Minneapolis, one man falling from a ladder knocked off three or four others. Had he saved himself, they would also have been saved.

He who laughs at himself will not laugh alone.

The only way to have continual peace is to have continual trust.

Every life ought to be a volume of God's thoughts in motion.

No man can get religion enough to keep him pure in bad company.

The man who reads the Bible prayerfully will always read it carefully.

If you can't do what you like to do, try to like the work you have to do.

When you want to make the devil run, tell him something God has said.

Get the cash from the man who never has a kind word for anybody.

A man who is mean to his wife is a man the devil is not even watching.

The man who is so busy that he has no time to laugh needs a vacation.

There would be more live Churches and more revivals if there were more happy Christians.

A small boy never washes behind his ears. A self-righteous man is a good deal like him.

It won't do any good to whitewash the well-curb so long as there is poison in the water.

The man who serves the devil will soon find out that he has to do it at his own expense.

One of the things the devil tries hardest to do, is to keep people from getting to God with their money.

When the grave closes, the Bible opens.

No man lives any higher than he looks.

God loves the man who is not afraid of giants.

A soft answer will kill where a club would fail.

The surest way to a man's pocket is through his heart.

Stand behind the truth, and the devil can't hurt you.

The right place for every Christian is where he is needed most.

You can't undertake to do anything good without having God to help you.

All the Bible Noah had after he got back upon dry land again, was written in the rainbow.

Every one who has much to do with children ought to spend a good deal of time with God.

Courage will never be rightly understood until we can look into the hearts of men from heaven.

If a woman had as many rights as wrongs, the world would soon appear to whirl a good deal faster than it does.

The testimony of a man who has n't heard the voice of God for twenty years is a terrible strain on any prayer-meeting.

A good time for patience to have her perfect work is when you find out that there is too much saleratus in the biscuit.

The angels have standing orders to throw wide open every window in heaven as soon as all the tithes are brought into the storehouse.

There is no right way to do a wrong thing.

The man who never looks ahead, always has to fall back.

No man can be any stronger than the foundation he stands upon.

Pray that you may not think evil, and then you will not speak it.

There are many hypocrites in the Church, but a good many more outside of it.

A pair of green goggles slanders the sun every time the man behind them looks at it.

If you want to be well known in heaven, don't try too hard to get a great name on earth.

There are men who never say a good word for their wives until they do it on a tombstone.

You will never go to heaven when you die, unless you get more than half-way there while you live.

The devil is willing to let any man keep nine of the commandments if he will agree to break the other one.

Not one man in a hundred can tell a lie without first trying to manufacture some kind of an excuse for doing it.

Every time the soldier handles his musket in drill, it has something to do with the way he will handle it in battle.

The devil is willing that every man on earth should try to get to heaven by his good works, and the minute he starts he tells him that is the only way to do it.

The only riches that do really enrich are those we can give away.

The only people who walk in the dark are those who walk without faith.

About the hardest thing God has to do is to find people he can trust with money.

If you want to know what you really are at heart, find out what you oppose.

A man who has n't got religion enough to hold him level in a horse-trade will bear watching everywhere.

If you can't get along well with your neighbors, don't buy a dog and file his teeth. Get more religion.

When Adam discovered what he was, he was miserable ; but when man discovers what God is, he is happy.

The devil is not much troubled about the children in any family where he can have his own way with the parents.

The devil has found out that the easiest way for him to get some people is to let them have their own way for a while.

The man who goes to heaven on flowery beds of ease will find himself in a mansion of not more than one room when he gets there.

God can not put any more meaning into words than man can get out of them. Before a man can tell the meaning of the little word "so" in John iii, 16, he will have to open the dictionary they use in heaven.

Cold prayers never bring warm blessings.

As soon as a man ceases to be stingy, God can be liberal.

No one is right with God who is wrong with any of his children.

To-day is the time to do; to-morrow is the fool's seed-time.

Success will never come to your house without a special invitation.

A living skeleton is not a good advertisement for any boarding-house.

If you do n't know whether a thing is wrong or not, notice who indorses it.

You may have to be obscure on earth, but you can be well known in heaven.

If people had to live to please each other, nobody would ever get to heaven.

A millionaire does n't weigh any more on God's scales than a man in a check shirt.

If you are a Christian, the devil will never get in front of you unless you turn around.

No man weighs very much for God who has n't got religion enough to make him happy and keep him so.

It ought to be a settled principle with every Christian that his first object in life shall be to please God.

It is hard to understand how a man can have all on the altar who spends more for tobacco than he gives to help support the Church.

The only real kings are those who rule themselves.

The higher you raise a little man, the more he shrinks.

A better thing than being a giant is to be a giant-killer.

No man can ever be rich whose happiness depends on money.

The surest way to become poor in earnest is to try to keep all you get.

The devil is always glad when he can get good people to wear long faces.

After the wine went into Noah, the curse came out. Wine never blesses.

Some people pay men to the utmost farthing, but rob God of everything.

The more love a man has in his heart, the more he needs brains in his head.

To be slow to anger is better than to own the best kind of a seven-shooter.

When a man is in the mud up to his neck it is poor time to put on a clean shirt.

One of the surprises of eternity will be to find out whom we have been living with in this life.

Whatever God does he does perfectly. A lion is no more complete in organic structure than a gnat.

Getting real bad men to be apparently good is one of the ways the devil has of trying to be respectable.

God's crumbs are bigger and better than the devil's loaves.

Everybody who tries to make others happy gets paid for it in heaven's money.

If all men would bite at the same bait, the devil could sleep nearly all summer.

Statues are molded with little touches. Characters are formed in the same way.

The only way to make a success of your religion is to have so much of it that it will make a success of you.

The devil, as a devil, never gained a soul. It is only when he appears as an angel of light that he is dangerous.

A mule will follow a bunch of hay all day, but he hates to be driven to pasture. There is a good deal of mule in man.

If you are a Christian, "holiness to the Lord" ought to be the sentiment going out with every yard of cloth and every pound of sugar you sell.

To be zealous of good works does n't mean to hold down a store-box and whittle, while your wife is at home hard at work trying to make a living.

There is no difference between God's commands. Every one is a test of loyalty. To break one means to be disobedient, and disobedience is defiance.

We are all apt to think ourselves a good deal better than God thinks we are. If some of us could get rid of our supposed goodness, it would n't take us long to get rid of our real badness.

If you have n't much, you can double it by being thankful.

The shortest cut to wealth is through the lane of contentment.

The man who is always looking for mud generally finds it.

Some men during their lives provide for everything but death.

We might all be rich if we would but learn to read God's handwriting.

Human nature on the throne is no better than human nature in the gutter.

If you have no temptations, stop! Turn around! You are going the wrong way!

Love and hope always live together. Kill hope, and love will bring it to life again.

If the devil could tell the truth, the saloons would all end with this generation.

No power on earth or in heaven has the right to authorize anybody to do wrong.

The Christian should always live in a way to compel the world to think well of Christ.

If churches were built without back seats, it would be hard work to get a backslider into one.

People whose religion is made up altogether of feeling never serve God except when he pays them for it.

As a rule women have poor memories, but they never forget the people who say nice things about their bonnets.

A doubt is the heaviest load anybody ever tried to carry.

Nothing is real success that is not according to God's plan.

People are very poor who have nothing they can not lose.

The most dangerous sinners are the most respectable sinners.

The man who lives only for himself is engaged in very small business.

The hypocrite is only on his good behavior while he thinks he is watched.

No man can walk with God without reaching out a hand to help somebody.

Prepare for little trials, and you won't have much trouble with the big ones.

The devil can't keep anything away from God's children that they really need.

If a poor man can give God ten cents out of every dollar he gets, how much ought a rich man to give?

There was weeping at the grave of Lazarus, but we do n't know that there was a tear shed when Methuselah was buried.

If you are not making the world better, it will be worse for your having lived. No man can leave the world as he found it.

The great heroes of the Church are people who do little things for Christ, with no expectation that they will ever grow to be more than little things.

No drinking man can be trusted.

Sin in its own clothes is never given house-room.

The devil never asks anybody to go farther than the next corner to begin with.

A man is always wrong with his brother when he is not right with God.

It is a great misfortune to be born so that all the laugh has to stay inside of you.

The man who is anxious to do right has friends in heaven who want to help him.

A Christian with a long face is one of the best advertisements the devil has on earth.

If you have never tried to make anybody happy, you have no idea how far you are away from heaven.

When the devil has a chance to go into a family of boys and take his pick, he always takes the best one.

To give any man a thought that will lift him toward God is better than putting money into his pocket.

When the devil does n't know how else to get a man he makes him believe that the Church is full of hypocrites.

If there was n't any devil, everybody would believe in the goodness of God, but they could never know the meaning of it.

The Church member who never does anything to help the Church or the preacher, is trying to sponge his way to heaven.

Eternal life means eternal growth.

Every habit is either a wing or a chain.

Christ died to keep the sinner from killing himself.

He who hates another inflicts punishment upon himself.

All the reward love ever asks is the privilege of doing its best.

Beware of little sins. Mosquitoes drink more blood than lions.

Every time you find a new promise in God's Word you become richer.

The devil will never be chained while the lightning-rod man is loose.

No man can please God by accident. He must want to do it, and plan to do it.

A good man needs no monument. Nothing but his dust can be put into a coffin.

God never sends danger to the man to whom he has not previously given courage.

If it was possible for God to live in Christ, it is possible for him to live in all men.

It is good blood that makes good health, and not good health that makes good blood.

Thousands of people would work like beavers in the Church if they could only do it in the front window.

A good many people start out to lead a Christian life with the intention of going no farther than they find the roads smooth.

A Christian is one who knows the truth, loves the truth, and lives the truth.

The man who does right, only because he is compelled to, is not a Christian.

No man who loves his neighbor as himself will keep a dog who howls at the moon.

The man who says the world owes him a living, generally has trouble in collecting the debt.

Every man who neglects to be saved to-day, invites the devil to come and get his soul to-morrow.

The educated sinner is the most dangerous sinner. His arms are longer, and his knives are sharper.

If you want to have your wife believe in your religion, don't look like a graveyard whenever breakfast is late.

The surest way to make a sinner ashamed of himself, is not to tell him what he has been doing, but what God has done for him.

If you sell cloth by a thirty-five inch yard-stick, you will find on the day of judgment that it has n't stretched any.

He who does least is the one who loves least. We are not told of a single thing Judas ever did to help his Master.

It is hard to have a revival in a Church where everybody wants to be a brigadier-general, and nobody is willing to be a private soldier.

Men can be found who seldom look high enough to see the tops of their own chimneys, and they don't live in ten-story buildings either.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CALL OF MATTHEW.

Some Thoughts Concerning Quiet Conversions.

“And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.”—MATTHEW IX, 9.

PEOPLE are never converted in the way they expect to be. The coming of Christ was not according to human expectation, although it was true to prophecy in every particular; and neither does his coming to the individual heart correspond to what the mind has pictured out. If God's coming were not a surprise, the soul could not be sure but that it had been deceived by something of its own creation. Every one expects that if he is ever converted it will be thus and so, just as Naaman did about the way he was to be healed of his leprosy. Most people are looking for signs and wonders. They have an idea that they will either be shaken or struck down by an invisible force; that they will hear strange sounds and behold marvelous sights. They look for something to happen that will make the flesh creep. The wonderful conversion of Paul comes up in the mind, and they expect to have to pass through something like it. It may be that the conversion of Matthew, as it is

briefly narrated in the verse above, was given by the Holy Spirit to help all such to see that a man can be thoroughly regenerated in heart and life without any visible manifestation of the miraculous. No one will dispute but that Matthew was as thoroughly converted as Paul was, and yet notice how quietly and quickly it all came about! He is at his place of business, engaged in his daily duty of collecting the taxes, when, one day, Jesus stands before him, and engages him in conversation. Probably he began by talking to Matthew about his business, or of something else in which he was interested, and from that gradually led him to the thought of his own Messiahship. We do not know that Matthew had ever met Jesus face to face before, or that he had ever heard his voice, though it is quite probable that he had. He may have witnessed the performance of some of his miracles; or, he may have known some of the disciples, and heard their testimony concerning the wonderful things they could tell him of Jesus. But whether he had or not, it is clearly evident that, on the day when Jesus came to him, he listened with careful attention to all that he had to say, and when finally the great moment had come, and the question was squarely put to him as to what he would do, he at once arose, and decided the question forever by saying, "I will go;" and from that moment he was a faithful follower, and there is not a word to show that he ever for a single instant grew cold in heart, or by a single thought dishonored his Master.

On the day that Matthew made that great de-

cision, three worlds at least were interested in what his answer would be. In imagination I can almost see the angels leaning over the battlements of heaven, and the fiends from below pressing out of the pit, to hear what his decision would be; for in the moment between the words of Christ, "Follow me," and his reply, "I will go," great interests were at stake. It ought to make us all forget everything else, and do some of the deepest thinking of our lives, to remember that at that moment Matthew settled the question, not only of his own destiny in time and in eternity, but also that of millions of others; for his decision that day meant not only his own salvation, but that of every other soul over whom he had influence. Matthew wrote the gospel which bears his name, and which is the best life of Christ ever written. It is also the most convincing argument to the Jews from a Jew that Jesus was the Messiah to which all the prophecies pointed. Suppose he had held back that day, and waited for a look into heaven as clear as that Stephen had, or that he had waited to be struck down as Paul was afterward, his gospel would never have been written, and all that he has done to help deliver the world from the shackles of Satan would have been left undone. No one will read these lines whose life has not been considered in the Divine plan of bringing a lost world to God; no one whose heart and life and influence can be lost to Christ without disturbing the purpose of God. There is no one on earth to-day in whose soul Christ is not as much interested as he was in that of Matthew. Every life, no matter how lowly

its sphere may be, means something wonderful when it is lived for God. Is it hard to understand why there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth? We can now see why the dome of heaven should have been made to resound with celestial music that day when Matthew locked up his office, turned his back forever on his old life of sordidness and selfishness, on trickery and extortion, and went out to follow Christ and lead untold millions to the throne of God. Who knows what angels can see in your soul to-day, brother, while you are hesitating to say yes to God?

The prominent thought in the text is, that a man may have a quiet conversion and yet have a thorough one. There are people who can not get near a religious meeting, in which the Spirit is visibly present, without shouting; and yet they may not love the Lord any more than those of a more quiet turn, who probably could n't shout if they could look straight into heaven. Another thing is, that every man must decide for himself what his relation to God is to be. No one can be either saved or damned without himself giving the casting vote. No one can be lost who will decide to be saved in God's way—by yielding obedience to the known will of Christ.

“A man named Matthew.” God knows your name. You may be a stranger to your next-door neighbor, but you are not a stranger to Christ. He was wounded for your transgressions, and knows the street you live in, and the number of your house. The man next door may not know your name, but Jesus does. If you had to prove by your nearest

neighbors what kind of a man you were to keep from going to prison, perhaps you could n't do it. If you had to be identified at bank, it might be that you would have trouble in doing it. Perhaps the man across the street couldn't tell whether you were a Christian or no, or to what Church you belonged. He might think that you were a Presbyterian, when you were a Baptist; or that you were a Methodist, when you were a Lutheran.

The men who touch elbows with you in the street-car, as you ride home to your dinner, might be very wide of the mark if asked in regard to your politics. One might say that you were this, and the other that you were that; but there is one Eye continually resting upon you to whom even the most secret thoughts of your heart are known. God knows your name; remember that! No man ever bears his real name in this life, but God knows what it is. His wife does not know it; his mother does not know it; his nearest neighbor and best friend does not know it; and very often he himself does not know it, for the heart is deceitful; but God knows it. Another thing: Whenever God speaks to a man, he calls him by his right name. We flatter each other, and feed the vanity of one another, by using names that are undeserved; but God never does this. Whatever he calls us, that is what we are.

"Sitting at the receipt of custom." This tells us where Matthew was, and what he was doing. He was not a street loafer, but he was a business man. He had something to do, and was doing it. He was n't sitting in the gate of the city, in a crowd of

the devil's own choosing, whittling a soft stick to nothingness, and wasting his time in idleness; but he had an object in life, and was trying to accomplish something. He was prompted by a motive, and was working according to a plan. This shows him to have been a man of decision and character. He had a fixed purpose, and this proves that he was energetic. There was a force within him that was overcoming something. It was no part of the Savior's thought to destroy that force; what he wanted was to get control of it.

Matthew was a tax-collector, a business in which there was great profit; and it is likely that he was wealthy, for Zaccheus was engaged in the same business, and we are told that he was very rich. This shows that he had something to give up when the Savior called him, and during the time in which he was making the decision there must have been a great struggle going on. But it also shows another thing, and that is, that riches can not satisfy. Money alone never brings peace to any one. There would not be so many sad hearts if men could only learn this lesson earlier in life. Men love money because they love power, and it seems to come nearer being omnipotent than anything they can put their hands upon. It is not because gold is bright that men want it, and make sacrifices and commit crimes to obtain it, but because it cries with a loud voice: "Get me, and I will give you all things!" They pursue it for what it promises, and gain it only to be mocked by it.

Another thing should be borne in mind, and that is, that Matthew was engaged in a business which

was condemned by his countrymen. He was despised and looked down upon because he would league himself with Gentiles, and help the Romans to collect duty from his own brethren. The publicans were always classed with sinners, and spoken of as such in tones of contempt that only a Jew, with the accumulated prejudice of centuries, could use; and yet, notwithstanding all this, Jesus sought him and won him to himself. Surely there is a place for every one of us in the house of God!

"And he saith unto him, Follow me." A man does not have to be in church to hear the voice of God. He does not have to be reading the Bible, or engaged in religious meditation. He does not have to be at camp-meeting, or actively engaged in works of charity. He does not even have to be on the popular side. It is not necessary that he should be rich or poor. But wherever he is, Christ is going to come to him, and try to persuade him to be reconciled to God. The lesson before us teaches that a man may be converted, and soundly converted, too, at that, while engaged in his daily business. Men can not put up a wall that will keep God out. Adam could hide from God, but he could n't escape his voice. It is n't likely that Matthew could go to the synagogue where Jesus taught, but Christ could go to him.

Wonderful things sometimes come about because a man has been brought face to face with Jesus Christ. See that man of great zeal, galloping toward Damascus. He has a commission from the highest ecclesiastical court in the world to persecute, bind, and cast into prison, in the name of God. He

is a sincere man, and really believes that he is doing God a service—so much can men sometimes be in the dark. But suddenly a light streams upon him from heaven, and in it he sees the face of the Son of God; and from that moment Saul of Tarsus is another man forever. No sooner did he know that he had been in the wrong than he wanted to be right, and immediately he said: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He was ready to go to work right away; and from that moment it was his proudest boast that he was the servant of Jesus Christ.

How different the history of the world might have been had Matthew not been willing to hear the voice of Jesus that day! Suppose he had said, "I am too busy to-day; come at another time." We do not know that there would ever have been another time for him; and if there had, perhaps he might not have been in the humor to hear the message. The command of Christ was, "Follow me!" and that meant a forward movement, a movement in the opposite direction from that in which he had so long been going. It meant: "You must leave this place, Matthew. You must stop this tax-collecting and swindling of your countrymen by extortion and high-handed means, and come with me, to be taught the things concerning the kingdom of God. Follow me!"

If you are a business man, are you sure that Christ has never called upon you at your place of business, and spoken to you very plainly? Have you never heard a voice saying, "That isn't right; your profit was too large; your means were not hon-

orable; it is wrong to keep the store open on Sunday; your methods are not strictly honest; you ought to make everything right that you know to be wrong?" If you have heard this, you have heard the voice of God; and if you have refused to follow it, you have been a rebel against his divine government as fully as Matthew would have been had he refused to walk in the way that Christ pointed out to him. You may stay away from Church, and go where you can not hear the voice of the preacher, but God will still call you to account through your own conscience, until you completely kill the accusing voice which he has put in your soul to call you to repentance. You may shut the Bible, and weight it down with all your worldly interests, but you can not shut out the eye of God from looking in upon your wicked heart. You may get money by means that would overthrow the throne of heaven if your arms were long enough and strong enough, but you can never get heart's ease and peace of mind while you refuse to hear the voice of Jesus Christ, saying, "Follow me."

"And he arose, and followed him." Matthew's will was not coerced. He was not forced to leave his old life, and give up his business. He could remain a publican if he saw fit; but he could not remain a publican and become a disciple of Jesus. At that moment no miracles were being worked; no signs and wonders were being wrought; no undue pressure was brought to bear upon him. There was no excitement, no clamor of the multitude that Jesus should be king. Jesus had not sought to force him into the service of God; but we may be

sure that he had used all his powers to persuade him to go of his own free will. He had first convinced him that he was the looked-for Messiah, and had then plainly asked him to become his disciple. And what was the result? He arose and followed him. His action could not have been announced in fewer words. The brevity of the Bible is sublime. God says in a word what man would want volumes to unfold. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." "He arose, and followed him." "Jesus wept." "It is finished." Four of the greatest facts of all history stated in a breath. Surely the very utterances bear the seal of God.

"And he arose, and followed him." If you are waiting for the coming of a great religious revival, brother, to help you get into the kingdom, it may never come. It is not likely that there has ever been a day of your life when you might not have become a Christian if you had decided to be one. Nine men out of every ten who put off giving their hearts to the Savior, will assign as a reason for it, "I do n't feel like it;" and perhaps you are doing the same thing. The devil doesn't want any stronger hold on a man than to get him to put off doing what he knows he ought to do. He knows that if he can get him to do it once, he can again. "I do n't feel like it," has cost many a man his soul. It isn't likely that Matthew felt like it, for he could clearly see that it would require him to give up his profitable business, and no man ever feels like doing that; but he knew that he ought to do it, and he got right up and set about it.

No man who will act up to his convictions and

live within the light God gives him can ever be lost, no matter if he has never heard a sermon or seen a Bible. But men are sometimes kept from acting in religious matters because they are afraid they might be deciding prematurely. Testimonies they have heard from those who were so "powerfully convicted" that they could neither eat nor sleep for days, and sometimes weeks, has had a tendency to confuse them, and they somehow or other get the thought in their minds that it will be safe for them to wait until they feel that way too. But a man might die and be lost a hundred times before having an experience like that. All the miracles in the Bible are typical of conversions, and are every one given to show that the work of the Spirit, although the same in result, is sure to differ in manner just as widely as individuals differ in character. A little girl could not have the same experience as an old man who had lived in sin all his life, and the conversion of an outlaw would not be likely to closely resemble that of a young man who had always been under the influence of a religious home. The raising of the nobleman's daughter differed very materially from the resurrection of Lazarus, and yet the work was the same in each. Study the miracles with this thought in mind, and it will throw much light upon the question. There never was a conversion not previously pictured in some of the Bible miracles. You can not only find your own experience there, but that of all your friends, and any others that you may hear of.

But, as previously stated, I believe the great lesson in Matthew's conversion is to teach us that

men may be saved whenever they are willing to be; to teach us that the most important of all things is to hear the Word of God and conform to it; that the Holy Spirit is always willing to save if we will only be willing to be saved.

I heard Mr. Moody say that, one night while he was preaching in Glasgow, a young man passing by concluded to step in a few minutes, and finding the place crowded he stood up near the door. He testified afterward, that just after he had taken his position Mr. Moody seemed to point directly to him as he said :

“Young man, young man, will you take eternal life as a gift from God? Young man, young man, will you take eternal life as a gift from God?”

“Take eternal life as a gift from God?” said the young man to himself. “Well, I would be a fool if I would n’t. Take it? Why, of course I’ll take it,” and he did, right there and then, and was instantly converted.

He did just as Matthew did. He considered the question; was convinced that he ought to decide then, and he did. He decided for himself, and took God at his word. He could n’t have done any more if he had groaned and lost sleep over the matter for a month or more. The great and important thing to do is to submit to the will of God.

The only struggle any man ever has is with himself and the devil. Nothing has to be done to move the arm of God. As soon as his conditions are complied with, the sin is blotted out. “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man

his thoughts, and return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him ; and to our God [the God of John iii, 16], and he will abundantly pardon." That door to salvation is always open, but it is not God's purpose to drive anybody through it. No man can ever go skulking around in heaven and saying, "I was brought here against my will." "Whosoever will may come," and it is just as true that whosoever will may stay away. In the parable of the Prodigal the father tried his best to persuade the elder brother to go into the house and have a good time, but he did n't lift a finger to drive him in.

Mr. Moody said that he was much interested in finding out whether the conversion of the young man above referred to was indeed thorough and genuine, and so when he returned to Glasgow eight years afterward his case was one of the first he inquired after. He was much gratified to learn that he had been constantly true to the Savior, and had been a zealous, earnest, and effective worker all the way through, and, judging from the visible fruits and what could be known from them of his inner life, his conversion had been as genuine as that of Matthew himself.

"He arose, and followed him." Matthew did n't know what Jesus saw in his life that day. He did n't know what glorious possibilities there were in his life for God. He did n't know that he was going to have arms long enough to reach clear down to the end of time to help people into heaven ; but Jesus knew it, and was glad when he decided. How much he would have blocked the wheels of

the chariot of salvation had he decided the other way! and who but God knows what great results may be depending upon what answer we shall each one of us make to his Holy Spirit when we put down this book?

Another illustration may be given to show what momentous results are sometimes determined by the answer that a sinful man may make to God. I will speak of the case of Mueller, of Bristol, England, the man who has been moving mountains with his faith for more than fifty years, and whose wonderful achievements, unaided by any arm save that of God, have amazed the world. For many years this man has supported and educated thousands of orphan children, erecting the asylums in which to house them, and bearing all the expenses at his own cost, involving in the aggregate many millions of dollars, and yet he has never asked a living soul to aid him to the extent of a single dollar. In addition to this, he has supported quite an army of missionaries, and has carried on a great deal of other expensive Christian work. Whenever he has needed funds he has not gone to influential friends or moneyed acquaintances with his wants, but he has taken them all to God. In short, whatever he has needed he has prayed for, from an overcoat to money enough to put up a building, and he has always got it. God has never failed him once, and this has been going on continually for more than fifty years. Surely if there has been anybody in our day whose life has been a convincing proof of the soundness of his conversion, there can have been no clearer case than that of Muel-

ler, and the manner of it is certainly worth our looking into.

“ If anybody ever had a conversion that was full of great signs and wonders and the most unmistakable evidences of the supernatural,” many will say, “ surely it was this man. If anybody ever had an out-and-out noisy, shouting, old-fashioned conversion, it must have been a man like this great philanthropist, who could push back the windows of heaven, and reach in and help himself.” But such was not the case.

It would be hard to find a conversion more nearly like that of Matthew, in many particulars, than that of Mueller was. He was being educated for the ministry in the Established Church of Austria, but was a very wicked and profligate young man. Conversion was something he had never had any faith in. One night he went with a companion to a prayer-meeting in a peasant's cottage, which was attended only by the poorer people. Mueller's companion had told him that the meetings were odd, and that it was great game to attend them. This was the kind of motive that prompted him. In the course of the meeting an ignorant little man offered a prayer. His gifts were few, but he had the Holy Ghost, and knew how to talk with God. While the man was praying, Mueller had to admit to himself that there was a power in his prayer which he could not explain or account for. It made the life he had been leading seem worthless and unworthy, and filled him with strong desires to live for good; not to acquire great fame, but to be a helper to those about him, and to light the lamps of joy in human hearts.

That was the way that Jesus took to say to this man as he had said to Matthew, "Follow me!" As the man prayed he seemed to be talking to a presence that Mueller felt was God. He had to say to himself: "With all my gifts of education and my knowledge of the Bible, I could n't frame a prayer with such eloquence as that." As the prayer went on he determined that from that hour there should be a change in his life. There should be no more wild escapades, no more drunken sprees, no more profligate waste of money and bringing sorrow to his father's heart, but he would try to do all the good he could on his journey through the world. It was simply a matter of quiet determination in his breast that he meant with all his heart. He had no such sense of conviction as some of us have experienced, and we have all heard about. He didn't just understand that he was entering into a covenant with the living God, and that he had fully and wholly and unconditionally surrendered himself to him; but as he went away from the meeting a sweet, quiet peace came into his heart, which, he says, has never for a single moment departed. "He arose, and followed him," and he has led him into paths of pleasantness and usefulness and peace. A great deal depended upon his decision that night, as he sat in that little prayer-meeting and listened to the peasant's prayer. The result that followed shows that he could not have been any more thoroughly converted, or any more faithful after his conversion, had he been in the deepest soul anguish possible for a month or more. The truth is, that he complied with God's conditions, and received the

reward of obedience. Salvation is not given to any man because he prays and feels wretched, but because he submits himself to God. Jesus says, "Behold I stand at the door and *knock* [not break the door down]; if *any* man [not the man who has n't been able to sleep for a month, but any man who is willing] hear my voice and will open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." These conditions Mueller complied with by not quenching the Spirit, and the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost was his reward. I do not want to belittle the work of conviction, but I believe that when it is agonizing and prolonged, it is because men have hardened their hearts against God, and have refused to hear all previous whispers of his love. God often sends the storm that we may be willing to hear the still small voice.

It may be that some have followed me thus far who have never had the sweet assurance that their sins have been forgiven and that they have really been born of God, because their experience has been so decidedly different from that of many they have heard. They can remember that there was a day when they thought seriously of religious things, and decided to lead a Christian life. There were many things that puzzled them perhaps, but they did not want to continue in rebellion against God. They did n't know just how to lay hold upon Christ, it may be; but they were conscious of having a definite purpose and a fixed determination of trying to please him. With this thought in mind they joined the Church, left their old ways, and avoided all evil associations. They read the Bible with a

longing desire to find in it a knowledge of the will of God, and took their burdens to him in believing prayer. They found a quiet restfulness in trusting in the promises. And yet there was always a doubt as to whether their names had really been written in the Lamb's book of life. They never deliberately did things they knew to be wrong, and whenever the Divine law was broken it caused them pain. It hurt them in the heart to hear others speak lightly of religious things, and to hear open profanity smote them like a stab. They had a love for religious worship and the house of God, and the Bible was more to them than any other book. They loved God's people, and selected their associates from among them as far as possible, being strongly drawn to those whom they believed to be altogether consecrated to his service; and yet, with all this, they were continually conscious of a most unsatisfactory condition in their experience—a condition of unrest, because of the doubts which would spring up about their conversion. They longed to know the truth—to find out just how they stood with God. Often they would be troubled with the fear that they had n't repented enough, or that they had n't repented long enough, or loud enough, or hard enough; or that they had n't prayed enough, or been as anxious about their sins as they should have been. The trouble with all such has been that they have not been looking in the right direction. They have been looking too low. They have been looking at themselves—at their doubts, their fears, their feelings; their good works, past, present, and to come,—everywhere but at the blessed

fact that Christ has borne their sins in his own body on the tree. The only way to get to heaven is to look up. Nothing is promised to the man who looks down; but God and glory and all good are for the man who will look up, and keep looking up. "Look unto me, all the ends of the earth, and be ye saved."

A lady who had been for many years in the condition described above, one night dreamed that she was in a great, deep, black pit. Suddenly she turned her head and looked up to see how far it was to the top, and immediately she found herself high up in the heavens, with the sun shining brightly upon her. She turned her head to see how far it was down to the pit, and as she did so she found herself back in its awful darkness again. Once more she looked up, and was in the sky right away; and she found that when she looked up she was up, and when she looked down she was down. Brother, look to Christ, and you will live as long as you keep looking to him. In spiritual life we always live just where we look and as we look. If you have consciously given yourself to God, live with your eyes fixed upon him, and your peace will be secure. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee," is not an idle promise; but there can only be perfect peace where there is perfect trust. Whenever Satan comes to you with a very attractive assortment of doubts that he wants you to look at and appropriate, send him to Jesus. He will never stop coming until you learn to do this.

"Submit yourself to God; resist the devil and he

will flee from you." Submitting yourself to God means to get in an attitude of obedience, and stay there; and resisting the devil means to refuse to believe him. The first and great condition of obedience to God is to believe his word. This is his word: "To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x, 43.) "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." (1 John v, 1.)

CHAPTER VIII.

SOME RAM'S HORN WRINKLES.

It makes the devil mad to be called by his right name.

The way to make a man right is to make his heart right.

God never uses a man who is not willing to do little things.

One of life's richest possessions is the memory of a good mother.

Lions are never so big as we think they are from their roaring.

You can't make a guilty man happy. He must first lose his guilt.

The greatest blockhead is the one whose mistakes teach him nothing.

The devil has no fault to find with people who are satisfied with themselves.

Every sinner would be a devil if he had the power to do as he wants to do.

Men who turn back when they see the lions in any walk of life, will never hear the angels sing.

Ever since Adam left Eden, God has been trying to tell man where to go to find a better paradise, but the blockhead won't put his ear to the telephone.

A little world always makes a little man.

Head-love never sheds any of its own blood.

Doing will not take us to heaven, but not doing may keep us out.

If some of us had more religion, we could get along with less money.

An enemy is an enemy, no matter whether he carries a flag or a musket.

You can tell a good deal about a man's religion by the way he treats his horse.

"I give as much as anybody else" means "I know I don't give half enough."

If you want to do good, open your eyes, and you will behold a world full of opportunity.

If some people would always think twice before they speak, they would keep still a good deal.

One proof that Christ lived is found in the fact that there are people among us to-day who resemble him.

Perhaps the hottest fiery furnace into which a child of God can be cast is that of worldly prosperity.

Men can kill just as positively by keeping money in their pockets as they can by taking revolvers out of them.

The most dangerous saloon-keeper is the one who most successfully conceals the fact that the devil is his partner.

An exchange says there is a good deal of character in a man's back. It may be, but is n't there a good deal more in his backbone?

If you have parted with your sins, don't hunt them up to say good-bye.

Some men wait for opportunities, but others go to work and make them.

God will not take you by the hand as long as you keep your mittens on.

People sometimes think they need more grace, when all they need is more rest.

It is not an easy matter for God to get his arms around a man who already has his arms around a bag of money.

God pity the man or woman who has to keep stirring up the fires of emotion all the time in order to stay religious!

There are two things about a fountain-pen that everybody soon finds out. Sometimes it will work, and sometimes it won't.

Drive the devil out of the church at one door, and he will immediately put on a different coat, and come in again at another.

There is many a man who would be scared almost to death if he could only feel his own spiritual pulse, and find out how near dead he is.

When the devil wants to run his claws clear through a man and clinch them on the other side, he makes him believe that moderate drinking won't hurt him.

The man who achieves is the one who has an idea and believes in it. Columbus was not after a myth. The new world was as real to him before he found it as it was afterward.

Faith can see in the dark.

Every man is ruled by what he loves.

Play is what a boy does n't have to do.

The right cross for you is the first one you find.

A starving man won't find fault with the tablecloth.

Money that has blood on it won't buy very much.

The real giant is the man who overcomes himself.

People who do not believe much never accomplish much.

The things which cause us the most trouble never happen.

The poorest man on earth is the one who has the fewest trials.

To be all the time feeling for feeling, is a poor way to get more religion.

What some people call prudence is often only another name for meanness.

When we get to the end of life, we shall find that the only things we have really lost are those we tried to keep.

The devil is always ready to walk arm in arm with the man who says: "I do n't have to join Church to be a Christian."

If moderate drinking is allowable and respectable, what's the reason moderate stealing, or any other kind of qualified meanness, is not commendable?

If some of us would pray more we would grumble less.

The devil has one hand on the man who does not give.

The man who tells good news always has a pleasant voice.

Eve took but one apple; Adam would have shaken the tree.

It is not what we give to God, but what we keep from him, that makes us poor.

Treasures in heaven are treasures forever, but treasures on this earth are only treasures for a little while.

You can find men everywhere who don't know the meaning of the word "give" from actual experience.

If scandals and crimes could be kept out of the newspapers, the devil would soon be walking on crutches.

The man who prays, "Thy kingdom come," ought to be willing to go to the ends of the earth to help establish it.

Very few men ever break their necks by falling from the tops of mountains. It is the little falls that are the most deadly.

A bug trying to run its head into a gaslight is about as wise as the man who thinks a drink, now and then, won't hurt him.

No man ever gets to the top anywhere without first going through fires hot enough to show that he has good metal in him.

The devil uses a good deal of whitewash.

If the devil had to wear his own clothes he would never leave the pit.

The love of God is so great that no man can be lost who will believe in it.

The man who expects to outrun a lie had better start with something faster than a bicycle.

No man ever won great battles who did not fight under some kind of a flag that meant something.

The people who claim that there is no life in religion are the very ones who are trying the hardest to kill it.

There may be apparent prosperity to the wicked, but no real peace ever comes to the soul that hates the law of God.

One reason why people backslide so easily is because there are so many of the Lord's sheep who have been raised on goat's milk.

When an engineer wants to stop an engine he does n't put a brake on the balance-wheel, but shuts off the power that makes it run. When you want to quit your meanness, the work must begin on the inside.

If there is any debt that the Christian owes, it is to give a decent support to the minister of the gospel. God would n't have the oxen muzzled that trod out the corn; and if he looked after mere cattle so carefully, do n't you suppose he is keeping an eye on the way his preachers are being treated?

If you want to be good-looking, behave that way.

Look out for the man who apologizes for sins of any kind.

If nobody had a hobby, the world would soon stop moving.

There was joy in hell when the first man rolled into the gutter.

Fame is a shining garment, but it soon wears out at the elbows.

Nothing good can be lost on earth that will not be found in heaven.

Some people behave as though they had been baptized in cold water.

The spider and the honey-bee can not agree as to what flowers were made for.

If every dog who barks would bite, the world would soon be full of sore legs.

People who never have anything to overcome, never amount to very much.

It is a thousand times harder to be happy with riches than it is without them.

Every man who has ever heard of Adam has blamed him for the fall, but God never has.

A man can be moral without being religious, but he can't be religious without being moral.

How great must be the power of the devil, when it takes a body-guard of angels to protect a righteous man.

No matter where we open the Bible it will tell us something about God's faithfulness to man, and man's unfaithfulness to God.

The wheels of time only turn one way.

The man who believes nothing is nothing.

In building a Church the nails are of more consequence than the steeple.

If all folks were as good as they think they are, the sun would never set.

If men did not know what is right, they could not condemn other people.

No man can oppress the weak without killing something good in himself.

Sin makes an awful change in us, but it never makes any change in God.

The right kind of success is the kind that blesses everything it touches.

No man has a right to use his time without asking God to tell him what he shall do with it.

The more of a stranger a man is to God, the harder he finds it to get along with other people.

Getting good people to wear long faces is a means the devil uses to keep some of the Churches empty.

People who have the least charity for others are those who have been least tried and tempted themselves.

No man can have God for his Father who wants to have his own say as to whom he will have for brothers.

The people who never get up in a religious meeting except to exhort other people to behave better, talk too much,

No man can get rich without God's consent.

Fishing for compliments is almost as bad as fishing on Sunday

Do n't talk much about yourself when you want to be interesting.

Every life is full of unfinished towers begun in opposition to God.

No man has religion enough who does not rejoice in the Lord always.

No man can have right views about redemption who has wrong views about sin.

Prove that there is no devil, and how can you explain where whisky came from?

If the earth were covered with flowers all the year round, the bees would get lazy.

"You're a good fellow," is one of the ways Satan has of saying, "I've got a mortgage on you."

We do n't need any better gospel, but we need a good many more plain preachers.

When people are afraid of getting too much religion, they are in danger of losing all they have got.

One reason why some people do not do any good is because they are not willing to do a little at a time.

Drive all the devil's friends out of the Church, and some preachers would have very small congregations.

You will never see God's face through your sins. You must throw down your sins and look over them if you would see the smile of mercy.

The truth never apologizes for coming.

The Lord's side is not the whisky side.

We often pay the most for what we need the least.

The devil's work is to make wrong people think they are right.

No one who takes God for a teacher can long remain ignorant.

Love never has to be watched to see that it does a full day's work.

Devils might serve God, but only his own children can please him.

It is a good deal easier to be contented without riches than it is with them.

If head religion could take people to heaven, somebody would get there in a balloon.

The man who keeps right does a good deal to help other people to behave themselves.

One of the hardest things for a man to do is to own up that he is as mean as God says he is.

The man who makes a practice of drinking when he wants to, will some day have to drink when he does n't want to.

God does not expect any man to throw away his head when he gives Christ his heart, but occasionally there are people who do it.

If you find that it takes a good deal of religion in other people to keep you from finding fault with them, there is something the matter with your own experience.

No man can understand anything that does not begin in himself.

Every thought that lifts men out of the dust comes from God.

The man who has nothing worth fighting for does n't fight much.

No man prays earnestly who does not work with fully as much earnestness.

Love in the heart is the only thing that can take the sting out of the tongue.

Every day you put off repentance you will have another day's sin to repent of.

The greatest wrong any man can do himself is to deceive himself about God.

If God puts you in the fire, be thankful; it is because he can see gold in you.

If you belong to Christ, he knows your name and the number of your house.

The trials of daily life are lions, which may be slain and turned into bee-hives.

The man who lives in this world only for himself, robs every other man in it.

What the Church needs as much as anything else is a degree of piety that reaches down to the pocket-book.

Astronomy has counted three hundred and fifty millions of shining worlds, all no doubt full of gold-mines; and yet the Church is crowded with people who are afraid that God will not be able to fulfill his promises.

The religion of some people consists in a set of notions.

Every finger-board pointing toward heaven says, "Start now!"

When a man lives to please himself, he lives to please the devil.

People who kill lions learn to shoot by practicing on smaller game.

The only prayers that God will answer are those that we can not.

One of the saddest sights to be seen on earth is a wicked old man.

Every time you do anything for God you take a step toward heaven.

Good sense is one of the good things it is hard to have too much of.

A stingy man is the last man in the world to find out that he is one.

If the devil gets you by the finger he will try to get your whole arm.

Nobody has ever found happiness who did not seek for it in God's way.

A man seldom falls on the ice. Our tumbles come when we think we are safe.

The moment we give ourselves to God, we get where God can give all things to us.

It takes more religion to make a dyspeptic smile than it does to make a healthy man shout.

The man who has never been ashamed of himself has never been well introduced to himself.

There are no black sheep in the real fold of Christ.

Birds of the brightest plumage do not make the best pot-pie.

No good ever came to any one that blood did not pay for.

The easiest way to pray for happiness is to say, "Lord, make me useful."

The devil never has any anxiety about the man who says, "I can drink, or let it alone."

The poorest soul on earth is the man who has no time or inclination to do anything but make money.

The inevitable result of seeking wealth is anxiety and care. The result of seeking God is love, joy, and peace.

It is not a hard matter to trust God, but there are a good many of his professed children you can't depend upon.

All the devil's troops in a community can't prevent the coming of a revival, but the smallest kind of a Church fuss will.

The real battle is always fought before a gun is fired. Job's victory over the devil was accomplished before he lost a camel.

Every unconverted man hates God, and would kill him if he could. The sufferings and death of Christ had to be undergone to prove this fact.

The devil got into Paradise, and the very first thing he did was to try to destroy it. A sinner in heaven would behave in exactly the same way.

Beware of the thing that bad men are in favor of.

We are doing most for ourselves when we are doing most for God.

No man will ever feel right until he believes right and behaves right.

The man who tries to get to heaven on stilts will have a good many tumbles.

The world is full of people who are right in their hearts and wrong in their heads.

The man who is honest with God does n't need a big income to make him happy.

There are not many poor men who would do a rich man's work for the pay he gets.

Before you can lift people toward heaven, you must stand on the hand of God yourself.

The only way you can persuade some people to join Church is to convince them that it pays.

Men never find God with the head until they have first come in sight of him with the heart.

One way to drive the boys and girls to the bad is to shut up the parlor and live in the kitchen.

There are men who would growl that the wind was in the wrong direction if it were raining money

The woman with the two mites had a longer arm for God than the young man with great possessions.

When God's work comes to a stand-still, you can depend upon it that obstacles are in the way that human hands can remove.

The time to be pleasant and make it count, is when everybody else is unpleasant.

It takes more religion to hold a man level in a horse-trade than it does to make him shout at camp-meeting.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRIAL OF JOB.

Every Godly Life is Full of Glorious Meaning
from Where God Sees.

"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil."—JOB I, 1.

I WOULD rather have my name stand alongside of Job's in this declaration than to have it said that I was the wisest, or the richest, or the most gifted man in all the earth. To have God say that I was pure gold, and above injury by any fire into which I could be cast, would be the highest desire my soul could have. Some people do not believe that perfection in this life is possible; but the Holy Ghost here tells us that it was attained before Abraham and Lot went into Canaan. That it was an actual reality before Joseph was sold into Egypt, and that it had been realized before Moses and David, and before a single page of the Bible had been written; for it is admitted among all scholars, both saint and sinner, that the Book of Job is the oldest of all the sacred writings, and that ages before Christ had come, and suffered, and died, a man had lived to whom God could testify that he was not only perfect, but upright. Here was a man with credentials

that ought to make him welcome in any society on earth or in heaven, and God showed his confidence in that man by using him to prove that God was right and the devil was wrong. Job was a man who had religion that would stand any kind of weather and live in any kind of a climate. It was equal to any kind of an emergency, and was so deeply rooted and grounded in the man that the devil could n't take it from him. Some of us have a splendid article of religion for fair weather; but when the clouds come, and the sky gets black, and the storm pours down upon us, we backslide in a hurry. We can trust God and be happy as long as our pockets are full of money; but when the bank breaks, our religion all goes with it, and we are no better off than people who do not know that God gave his Son to die for the sins of the world.

Job was not only perfect in his loyalty to God, but he also behaved the way he believed. He was not a religiously bow-legged man, or a spiritually lopsided man, but he was an upright man. He did n't lean over toward the devil's country in his walk toward heaven, but he kept his head straight up, and his eyes fixed on the throne. Job got started right, and he kept right. He did n't look back to see how straight he was plowing, but he kept the oxen going, and never took his eye off the stakes ahead, and by so doing the furrow he made was so straight that it pleased his Master. Job's prosperity did n't make him religious, but he was religious in spite of his prosperity. The man who can be rich in both worlds at the same time is a man whom God loves and angels admire. The

hottest fiery furnace into which a child of God can be cast is that of worldly prosperity. Too much strength is what wrecked Samson. Too many cattle made Lot a Sodomite, and their fatness in flocks and herds made the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh content to remain on the east side of the Jordan, instead of going over with their brethren to possess the inheritance God wanted to give them. If there was n't so much money in the world to-day, there would be a great deal more religion. It takes a good deal of grace to be a good Christian with a big income. If some of us had less silver, we would n't live so far away from the cross. The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof. The silver is his and the gold; but the trouble is, that some of us forget that we are all simply clerks and book-keepers for God, and so we are too much like many of the bank cashiers,—we become embezzlers, and go to speculating with our Lord's money; and the moment we get a chance to salt down all we can carry, away we go, turning our backs on God's country and breaking for the devil's Canada. A good many of us are spiritual defaulters at this minute. One of the hardest things God has to do is to find people he can trust with money. We ought to be just as ready to thank God for poverty as for riches. Wealth might be a sharp knife with which we would cut our eyes out, and God knows this, and like a loving parent he keeps it away from us. If we were all as loyal to God to-day as Job was, God would make us just as rich.

The next noticeable thing about Job is, that God had not only been watching him, but the devil

had also been keeping an eye on him. We are told in the Book of Job that the devil made a great deal of trouble for Job; but I want to say right here that God himself only knows how much trouble Job made the devil. There's one thing certain, the devil never got a good night's rest as long as Job walked the earth. I think about one of the most tranquil days the devil ever had was the day that Job was taken home to God. As long as Job was alive the devil had no peace. He was kept continually going to and fro on the earth, and walking up and down in it. That's what he said when he edged in among the sons of God, and came before the Lord just as though he had a right to be there. And when God said, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, and have you noticed that there is none like him in all the earth? Have you observed that he is a perfect and an upright man, and one that eschews evil?" the devil showed by his reply that he had been keeping a close eye on Job. He said: "Does Job fear God for naught? It is not a surprising matter that he loves you; you are paying him well for doing it. He would be a fool if he did n't serve you at the price you are paying him. You have hedged him in all around so that no misfortune can come to him. He has been prospered in every conceivable way. He has never had a desire that you have not gratified. You have given him children that he can rejoice in—children who love him and love one another. You have also made him rich in oxen, and sheep, and camels. You think Job is perfect and upright, but he is n't. He does n't love you for yourself, but for what you give

him. He is not obedient because he loves to do your will, but because it pays. Take away his property, and he will curse you to your face."

Do n't you know that is exactly what the world says to-day? They say: "That man is preaching for money;" or, "She belongs to Church because she can have a better time, and go in good society;" or, "That man has n't got a grain of religion—he has simply joined the Church to sell boots and shoes, or dry-goods, or pumps, or stoves, or something." But the Lord knew Job, and was not afraid to turn the devil loose on him; and so he said: "He is in thy hand. You may take away his property, and do what you please; but do n't put your hand on him—do n't touch him." I have an idea that if the devil ever did rejoice, he was glad right then. This was a great surprise to him. He never expected to have such a good chance as this—full swing to do as he pleased with Job's sons and daughters, and oxen and camels. I have no doubt that he thought Job would now soon become one of the best captains in his own army; and so he started out, determined to make short work of the peace and trust of this grand old servant of God.

I have an idea that Satan had long been wanting just such a chance as this. As he had watched this man of God, walking so uprightly that he could n't touch him with the end of his finger, his devilish heart had burned with a desire to get a chance to see what he could do with him. Perhaps he had the campaign all planned, and had long ago made up his mind just how he would begin, and what he would do, one step after another, if he got

a chance to turn his army loose on Job; and when God gave him permission to throw out his skirmishers and begin the fight, it is probable that he did n't lose any time in getting at it, for fear the Lord might discover signs of weakness in Job and change his mind. And so he speedily held a council of war with his most able and trusted generals, and gave them their battle orders. They were to take possession of some of the servants of Job, and overwhelm the old patriarch with bad news. They were to come like the wind, one after another, and give him blow after blow in places where he did n't expect them; and before he could catch his breath and recover from one calamity, they were to hit him with another a great deal worse.

I do n't think that Job really lost any of his property or any of his children; but the devil made him believe that almost everything worth living for had been swept away, and that answered his purpose a good deal better. When he had made Job believe that God had forsaken him, and got him to cursing and denying him, the devil would mock him, and taunt him with being an out-and-out hypocrite, by showing him that he was still as rich as he ever was; and that would make him so ashamed of himself that he could n't go back to the service of God again, and so the devil would have a mortgage on him throughout eternity.

Perhaps Job knew all about the party that was being held in the house of his oldest son, and he may have been sitting in the old homestead, rejoicing in the joy that he felt assured they were having; and just then the devil's first messenger

jumped from a dripping horse at the door, rushed in without ceremony, and with a cry of anguish, exclaimed, as he wrung his hands :

“The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword—killed every last one of them but me. I happened to be on a horse and got away, but I tell you I had a close call.”

And while he was yet speaking there came another—before Job could go and tell his wife about it, and have the help of her womanly sympathy and strong words of courage; or before he could breathe a prayer to God for help—another of the devil’s major-generals dashes up, with a brigade or so of the imps of darkness controlling another of Job’s servants, and says :

“The lightning struck the sheep-folds, and killed all the sheep, and all the shepherds except me. The stabling was set on fire, and everything is consumed.”

“And while he was yet speaking,” along comes another, and cries out :

“The Chaldeans made three bands, and surrounded the camels, and carried them all away; and they killed every one of the keepers except me.”

“And while he was yet speaking,” just as poor old Job is about to fall in the dust, in comes another, and, with streaming eyes, begins to cry out :

“Your sons and daughters were all having a good time in their oldest brother’s house, and a cyclone came along from the wilderness, and knocked

the house down, and swept it away, and killed every soul in it except me!"

And then he goes at it to give Job all the particulars, telling how much this brave boy was mangled, and how that poor girl had to suffer before death ended her torture, until the poor old man almost faints away with anguish of soul.

All this time the devil has been watching him with a glee that was never known outside of the pit; and as he sees his face growing whiter and whiter, and his breath coming thicker and thicker, as messenger after messenger comes in, he believes that a great victory has been won, and that this grand man of God is ready to strike his flag and come over into his army. Suddenly, Job springs up with a determination that makes Satan start. The old hero shaves his head and rends his mantle, and then falls prostrate on the earth. His lips begin to move, and the prince of darkness leans forward to hear what he will say. These are the words that smite his ear:

"Naked I came into the world, and naked I must go out. The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away! Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

At these words the devil falls back aghast. His campaign has failed! Instead of the great victory he counted upon, the harvest has been defeat and disaster. He has found a man who has something the powers of hell can't reach. He has found a soul that does not serve God for gain. This gives the infernal one sore trouble, and sets him walking up and down in the earth again.

But again the sons of God come to present

themselves before the Lord, and Satan steals in among them; and once more is asked where he has been, and whether in his walks he has observed the perfect and upright Job. This time the devil makes another challenge, which God accepts. He has to admit that Job has not been serving God for worldly gain; but he insists on it that he is not as true as God thinks he is, and says that Job thinks more of his own life than he does of God. He says that if Job is made to suffer in his flesh and bone he will curse God. There he is, God tells him; he can try him, and see whether he will. He is in thy hand; only spare his life, and you may afflict him as you will, is the Divine permission. Had Job known of the great honor and distinction God had conferred upon him, how he would have rejoiced! He was about to fight a battle which unborn millions would behold. Satan then afflicted Job with sore boils, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot; but he could n't give him pain enough or misery enough to turn his eye away from God. He was still loyal to the heart; and when his wife, beholding the extreme anguish of his sufferings, told him to curse God and die, he only said:

“What? shall we only receive good at the hand of the Lord, and not evil?”

This was as much as to say: “We do not deserve anything but evil from the Lord, and yet he crowns us with great good. We ought to be so grateful for the undeserved good he bestows upon us as to be true to him forever, no matter what may come.”

The trial of Job's faith was bitter and severe,

and yet we are told that through it all Job sinned not with his lips. Some of us know what a wonderful testimony this is to the integrity of Job. We are always sinning with our lips. Even when our hearts are loyal, our lips are continually going wrong. We murmur and complain against the providences of God whenever we can't understand them. But Job didn't do that. He sinned not with his lips. He didn't say things that the devil could pick up, and circulate all around among his acquaintance, to kill his influence for the Lord. Not a word of complaint could Job be induced to utter against his God. He probably kept saying to himself:

"I can't understand it! I can't tell why I am afflicted in this way; but I know that God is good, and has some good reason for it, and I will trust him though he slay me."

As he sat there in the ashes, scraping himself with a piece of broken pottery, he cursed about everything else, but not one single word would he say against God. He cursed the day he was born, but not the slightest syllable would he utter against Him who had created that day.

His suffering was so great that when his three friends came to sympathize with him, they could not bear to break in upon his grief; but rending their robes and putting dust on their heads, they sat down with him in the ashes, and for seven days and seven nights looked silently upon him, and uttered no word.

These friends of Job wanted to comfort him, and they set about doing it with all the wisdom they

possessed; but they made sorry work of it. They could n't account for the great harvest of affliction that Job was reaping. A little while before, when the sunshine of prosperity was pouring down so sweetly upon him, they had said it was because Job was a good man, and God loved him; but now, as they sat there in the ashes, and looked upon their poor old friend as he groaned in woe and scraped his itching sores with a piece of broken water-jar, they had to shake their heads sadly, and say that they could n't understand it. Job was the last man in the world they would have picked out if they had been told to produce the biggest sinner in it; but present indications made it look a good deal as if that were the case. In that early day it had n't been found out that God suffers the wheat and tares to grow up together until the harvest; and the opinion prevailed that prosperity was a proof that a man's ways pleased God, and that the reverse was clear evidence that sin was being punished.

I can imagine the conflicting thoughts that must have chased one another through the heads of Job's old friends as they watched him in his misery. I fancy that I can almost see the look of bewilderment on the face of Bildad, as he muses to himself and wonders if it can be possible that Job has been a downright hypocrite all these years. Instead of being the good man everybody thought he was, is it possible that he has been rotten in the heart all the while. Perhaps the insinuations that this was the case, from his friends, caused Job a good deal more anguish than the boils with which he was covered. He could stand it to have his sheep and oxen

and asses and camels all swept away in a night, and he could even bear up under the woeful affliction of having his children all taken away at one time without the privilege of a last word with them, and when even his own body became a putrid mass of suffering his heart remained strong and brave; but to have his best friends think that his afflictions were but the just harvest of his hidden sins, what a crushing blow it must have been! No wonder he said, "Miserable comforters are ye all."

But I fancy that there was yet another spectator to this sad scene, who was a great deal more bewildered than the men who were sitting in the ashes with Job. You can rest assured that Satan was not walking up and down in the earth very much just then. If the devil ever engaged in a piece of work that completely absorbed all his attention for the time being, and made him stay right on the ground and look after it himself, I believe it was during those wonderful days when he was trying to keep Job from going to heaven. He had a job on hand, then, that he could not farm out to anybody else. There was n't a lost being in all his kingdom that he could trust to keep guard over Job for ten minutes. He could n't go home to get his dinner, or retire for an hour or so to get a little sleep. Not a bit of it. As long as Job had a boil on him the devil had to stay right there and see what he was going to do about it. I do n't think Satan ever acquired information after he was kicked out of heaven much faster than he did during those few days when he was trying to make Job go back on his religion. Job taught him a good many things that he never could have

found out any other way, and I have no doubt that if the prince of darkness ever did feel ashamed of himself it was while Job was teaching him a few letters that he never supposed were in the alphabet.

He had rebelled against God when he had every thing that heaven could give; but Job was true after he had lost everything that hell could take away. How small and mean he must have looked in his own eyes, when at last he had to give up the fight and go slinking back to his own dark kingdom, and tell his imps that he had just left a man whose feet were as fixed as the throne of God! His ammunition was all used up. There wasn't another gun in perdition that he could roll out and train against the man whom God had said was perfect and upright. The last dart had been thrown, and there was nothing left in the quiver that would do to aim at the man who was still intrenched under the Divine favor. And so the devil had to call home all his troops, and give up the fight.

But the moment Satan left the field God came back, and proceeded to pay Job for his fidelity with the biggest kind of compound interest. Instead of his flocks and herds all having been destroyed or carried away, as he thought, God had had his angels guarding them, and there they all were, not only safe and sound, but in the dark hours when Job thought himself a pauper they had been flourishing and increasing for him; and now, behold, they had doubled their numbers, and when the grand old hero came out of the fiery furnace of trial he found himself as rich again as when he started in. And it is always that way. The man whose trust is in

God can not be made poor. All things work together for his good; and the harder the devil works to rob him, the richer he becomes. Job knew a thousand times more about God after his trial than he did before, and his joy was infinitely greater. He paid a big price for his increased possessions, but they were worth a thousand times more than the cost; and throughout the endless ages of eternity Job will continue to draw interest on the investments he made in divine grace when he thought he did n't have a camel.

I do n't believe God ever lets a single tear go to waste that is shed because of loyalty to himself, but that, somewhere and somehow, he will change them into imperishable jewels to make somebody rich. Job felt very poor that day when he fell down in the dust; but he was n't. He was the richest man in all the earth, because he had the favor of God, and his temporary poverty was to make millions rich in faith and love. God knew Job a great deal better than he knew himself, or he never would have given Satan permission to wage war against him. He will never suffer any of us to be tried beyond our powers of endurance. But Job's trials were not for nothing. None of his tears were shed amiss. Every child of God, from Job's day to our own, is richer and stronger in the faith than he could have been without this blessed lesson. What bright and blessed skies of hope and peace have come to us because of the darkness which for a little while overshadowed him! Ten minutes in heaven will make us forget all we ever suffered on earth. To realize that by our being in the dark a

little while brought thousands of others into everlasting light will be enough to make us praise God throughout all eternity that he gave us such a glorious privilege. We ought every one to expect that when we get to heaven we will find great multitudes gathering there because of some measure of God's grace that was reflected to them by our lives, and none of us ever will know how good the Lord has been to us until we hear the story of these redeemed ones around his throne on high.

CHAPTER X.

THE TWO BEGGARS.

One a Beggar Before Death, and the Other
Afterward.

IN the sixteenth chapter of Luke, beginning at the nineteenth verse, we have a series of word-pictures that show in a vivid manner the difference between real and apparent prosperity. In the one case the success is only transient, and in the other it is eternal. One view shows us beggary as man sees it, and the other as God sees it.

The first scene presents a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. As we see things, it would be hard to picture a much brighter view than that. There is no dark background. Everything in the scene is bright. Rich, well-clothed, and well-fed. Clover everywhere, and no famine anywhere. The great scramble by the multitude to-day is for the position this man occupied. We are all looking out for No. 1. We all want to be rich and prosperous, like the man in our lesson. He could have everything his own way, and in that we want to be like him. Nothing was too good for him; the best of everything was his. He could scarcely realize a want before it was gratified. He didn't have to

deny himself, and economize for months, as some of us have to do; but he could say the word, and there it was. He did n't have his ups and downs, like many of us; but the sun of a continuous prosperity smiled upon him. It was not a feast to-day and a famine to-morrow, but he fared sumptuously every day.

In order that we may understand the story better, let us modernize it, and try to see it in the light of the present. The mansion in which this man lives is one of the finest in the city. Everything in and about it is elegant in the highest degree. Nothing that money can supply is lacking. The mansion itself is the perfection of architecture, and has every known appliance of luxury and comfort. The finest rugs and carpets are upon the floors. The furniture is all imported, and the very atmosphere of the place seems to smell of money. The most beautiful and costly paintings adorn the frescoed walls. The air is rich with the perfume of rare flowers. From a human stand-point nothing is lacking to give to the inmates of that home continual joy. See the family gather in the breakfast-room! The rich man, in a hundred-dollar suit that fits him like a glove, leads the way. Upon his arm leans the wife, who has walked beside him through the trials and triumphs of life. She, too, is well dressed, in garments of expensive beauty. Jewels of great worth sparkle from neck, arm, and ear. He is a man of lordly bearing. His face has the stamp of intelligence and dignity. His wife steps with the tread of a queen, and looks upon him with admiration and fondness. Following them come

sons and daughters, who bear the mark of culture and refinement. As they gather about the table, liveried servants attend upon them. Nothing that palate can crave is missing from the feast. An hour of the sweetest social communion quickly flies away, and then the happy family must separate. The father must go to the city and bury himself in business. His great wealth makes him many cares and loads him with many burdens.

The signal is given that the carriage is at the door. He takes leave of wife and children and goes down the marble steps, takes his place in the carriage behind a pair of noble steppers, and the ride to the city is begun. At the gate, which marks the boundary of his premises, a sad sight meets his eye; but he scarcely notices it, so intent is he in thinking of his investments and speculations. A poor, miserable beggar has just been laid there by some of his relatives, who have got tired of keeping him. The beggar is a great sufferer from some scrofulous disease. Great blotches of sores cover his person. His garments are scanty and poor, scarcely sufficient to protect him from the weather and conceal his nakedness. His condition is so wretched that passing dogs seem to have a compassion for him, and stop to lick his sores in pity. The poor man is starving from hunger and burning up with fever. With a piteous moan he raises his hand in supplication to the rich man as he dashes by, but the man in the carriage is too busy to stop and look after such as he. He must hasten to the city, and attend to his money getting. Perhaps he has a mortgage to foreclose on the home of a widow,

and he must be quick about it before some other creditor gets ahead of him. If he gives any thought whatever to the beggar, it is probably to determine that he will telephone a complaint to the authorities, and have him carted off to the poor-house.

We are not told how this rich man got his money. The world cares nothing about that. All it wants to know is that the man has money, and plenty of it, and it will bow down to him and do him honor. Gold is always bright, no matter what the substance may be upon which it is placed for gilding. Perhaps our rich man had failed several times for large amounts, and had compromised with his creditors for fifty cents or less on the dollar. Or it may even be that he was the cause of Lazarus being a beggar. He may have won his confidence, only to take advantage of him in some underhanded way, and cheat him out of his patrimony. Things of this kind have happened before to-day, and are taking place all over the world at the present time. It may be that the rich man was a prime mover in some great monopoly, that poured money into his coffers which had been torn by cruel extortion from the weak hands of the poor. May be he was in a distillery trust, or rented his property for immoral purposes, doing the business through an agent to quiet his conscience, and not thinking it worth while to inquire too closely into the matter, so long as the interest was sufficiently high to satisfy his avarice. Or it may be that he had some kind of a government job that gave him a chance to rob with a high hand, without much concern as to conse-

quences. But no matter how he was getting his money—whether honorably or dishonorably—it was his god, his idol, and his treasure; and he forgot that he would some day have to take up his journey to a country where gold would not pass current.

Look steadily at these two pictures for a moment. The rich man in his carriage—the beggar at his gate. If forced to choose to-day which condition we would prefer, how many of us would say "Give us the rich man's lot!" That is the way the world is choosing to-day. It is cake now, and no thought for bread after awhile. Like Esau, we are all too ready to sell our souls to feed our bodies.

How different is the lot of the beggar from that of the rich man! As the world sees, there is not a single spot of light about his condition anywhere. He has no friend to give him a kind word, or bring him a cup of water; no one to care whether he lives or dies. His feeble body is racked with pain in every joint. He has no couch upon which to rest his weary bones. His bed is the hard ground. He has no pillow upon which to lay his aching head. He has no shelter from the burning sun or the chilling storm. Throughout the long night he must suffer and moan and cry with pain, hoping for the coming of the morning, which can only usher in the agonies of the day. Famishing from hunger and thirst, neglected and forsaken, the poor, miserable being drags out the weary hours of his closing days. The crumbs that fall from the rich man's table would be a feast to him; but no

one brings them to him, and he is suffered to famish in the very shadow of the rich man's magnificent palace.

But his sufferings end at last. There comes a morning when, as the rich man drives forth, he finds the beggar's poor body at his gate, cold and stiff in death. The sight disturbs him, and the first policeman he meets is sent to carry the sad-looking remains to the morgue. Nobody knows how the poor man died. No loving mother held his head in her lap as his eyes grew blind in death. No fond wife smoothed his brow with a gentle hand. No circle of weeping friends stood around him as his spirit took its flight.

He had no brother to strengthen his heart by a kindly pressure of the hand. No child wept when it was known that he was dead. No sister sat by his bedside and spoke words of comforting love. Alone and unseen by mortal eye his spirit left the body at the rich man's gate, and joined the bright cloud of angels that had come to carry him to heaven. Not a friend had Lazarus to say "Good-bye" to him on earth, but he had many to say "Good-morning" to him that day in heaven.

There was no funeral for Lazarus. Nothing is known about what became of his body—perhaps it may have found its way to the dissecting-room of a medical college; but there is no uncertainty about his soul. It was carried in triumph by a band of angels to the throne of God, and he that was a beggar here became rich in the treasures of eternity. A mansion had been prepared for him in the city of the living God. A beggar for a day, he had be-

come a prince for evermore. That was eternal success, as God and angels see it. Brother, it is not a matter of more than momentary consequence as to who your father was. The great question is, what are you to be in the endless ages to come—a prince or a beggar? What are your prospects at this moment?

But there comes a day when something is wanted in the mansion of the rich man which money can not buy. One evening he is brought home from his counting-room with a burning face and a great, throbbing pain in his head. He is put to bed, and the best physician in the city is hastily summoned. A solemn hush settles over the grand house. The servants walk on tiptoe, and talk in whispers. The sons and daughters try to comfort each other with the hope that father will soon be better. The wife scarcely leaves the sick-room. By the bedside of the sufferer she watches day and night. Reporters flit about the house, and the newspapers tell the country that the rich man is slowly sinking. The hours creep wearily on, until finally hope spreads her wings and flies slowly away. A morning comes when there is crape on the door, and the word goes out on the wings of the wind that the rich man is dead.

After the death comes the burial. There is no uncertainty about what became of his body, for we are told in the lesson that the rich man also died and was buried. The funeral is a brilliant success. The leading undertaker of the city has charge, and fulfills his office to the satisfaction of everybody. The casket is of the most elegant description. A

mountain of flowers almost conceals it from view. The eloquent Dr. Somebody is called upon to preach the funeral discourse. He takes his place among the mourners, weeps, quotes poetry, and preaches the distinguished departed into a front seat among the blessed. Eminent men are chosen for pall-bearers. The rich man was, of course, a member of the leading societies, and they, too, participate in the obsequies, and publish resolutions of regret in all the newspapers afterward. A brass band marches at the head of the procession. Nothing that love or money can do is missing from the funeral. The surviving friends put on the most elegant mourning to give continual expression to their grief. The five brethren shed many tears while they stand at the open grave; but as soon as they get home their eyes become dry, and they begin at once to plan and scheme to break the will, so that they may each one get control of the lion's share of the property. Each one of them is anxious to get the position of guardian to the minor children. Lodge-rooms are draped in mourning, and memorial-papers are read before every society to which the influential and lamented deceased belonged. The Church of which his wife is a member is sure that it has suffered great loss, because he could always be depended upon to buy cakes at its festivals, and put his name at the head of all subscription papers that were going to be published. A magnificent monument is reared in the cemetery, on which the reputed virtues of the wealthy dead are deeply cut with a broad chisel, and perhaps his name is kept continually before the public eye by

being emblazoned in magnificent colors of living light upon a memorial stained-glass window, which his widow has had placed in the chapel where he sometimes went with her to sit and think of business ambitions while those about him were going through the form of worship.

It is thus that the memory of the departed rich man is honored; but where is he himself? Where is his soul? What is actually taking place behind that veil through which human eyes can not look? Listen :

“ In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments !” Who is there who wants his purple and fine linen now at such awful cost? A butterfly for a day and a worm forever after in the fire that is not quenched ! Who wants a palace and all its attendant luxuries and elegancies at such a terrible price ! What consolation can the thought of his past good times afford him now, while his soul is being tormented in the never-ending fires of hell? O foolish man ! to be satisfied with perishable things, when the incorruptible treasures of God which can never fade or pass away, may be had for the asking and taking.

While in the midst of his earthly prosperity the rich man never turned his eyes toward the throne of God. He was too much occupied with things down here to look toward the sky. He was too busy with his ledgers to get time to read his Bible. He was cultured, kind, and affectionate perhaps, but he had lived without any regard to the obligations he owed to his God. Riches are never a good thing except when we take them from the open

hand of God. If they are piled up so high that we can not see heaven over the top of them, they become a curse instead of a blessing. Some people never will look up until they are thrown flat upon their backs by the judgments of God, and this rich man was one of that kind. In life he was too busy with his own affairs to ever once look toward heaven: but in hell he could n't do anything else. Throughout all eternity the souls of the damned will have to look up and behold the joys they have lost, and this awful fact will make the fires of hell all the hotter.

When the rich man was driving by the suffering Lazarus in his carriage, he could n't give him more than a passing glance, but now he will never be able to turn his eyes away from him. He would n't see his wretchedness when it was in his power to have touched him with the hand of compassion, and now he must lie there in the torments of hell and behold his blessedness throughout the never-ending cycles of eternity, while an impassable gulf keeps him from sharing it. The conditions have now changed. He looks up, and Lazarus looks down. The rich man is now the beggar, and the beggar has become rich. Hear him plead: "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." This is the first prayer that ever went up from the depths of hell of which we have any knowledge, and it was the smallest prayer that could possibly be made. It was only for a drop of water; and yet, although the prayer was heard, it was not answered, and could

not be. In his vision of the Infernal, Dante saw that above the gates of hell was written, "Leave all hope behind, ye who enter here!" Don't put off your praying until you get to hell. Here the feeblest whisper from a contrite heart will fly straight to the ear of God, and quickly bring a legion of ministering angels, if need be, to supply the want; but once in hell means to be separated from the help of God forever.

Hear what Abraham said to him. Listen: "Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you can not; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence."

That settles the question of probation after death, on the authority of God's own Son. The gulf which separates the sons of God from the sons of Satan is impassable from either side, and it is fixed. It can never be filled up or bridged over. Once in heaven means safe for eternity, and once in hell means lost forever. The mansion which has been prepared for you has been made eternally burglar-proof. You have the Word of God for it that no one from the prison of the pit can ever break out and rob you of your celestial home. Heaven is so guarded that nothing stained with sin can ever get inside its jasper walls. Remember that. If you go out of this life without having been cleansed by the blood of Christ, you have bidden farewell to heaven forever.

“Water! water! water!—only one drop of water!” and that will be the unavailing cry of the lost rich man forever. An eternal beggar! O God, what a fate! If I must be a beggar, let it be in time, and not in eternity. Son, remember! Never let this picture fade from your mind, when you are tempted to forget God and worship the golden calf of present self-interest. Son, remember that it is best to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. In heaven’s name, don’t try to have all your good things here, and none hereafter! Lay up for yourself treasure in heaven. Get to yourself that incorruptible wealth which fadeth not away. See that you have something laid up above, where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal.

They thought the beggar was dead when they found his poor body at the rich man’s gate; but he had only just begun to live. While the rich man was leaving his palace forever, Lazarus was just taking possession of his, never more to quit it. He had never had any good things, and now he would never want for them. He had lost everything on earth, but he had gained everything in heaven. He did n’t have a grand funeral, like that of the rich man. There was no brass band, no dirges, no flowers. There were no secret societies in dazzling regalia, no tears, no mourners, no long procession. There was no crape, no eminent pall-bearers, no plumed hearse. No grand sermon was preached. His name was not emblazoned in the stained-glass window. No eulogies or resolutions of condolence appeared in the newspapers. No lodge-rooms were

draped in mourning. No marble or granite was spoiled for building purposes on his account. His death brought sorrow to no heart on earth, but it added joy to heaven. A great battle had been fought. A great victory had been won. A great hero had been carried by shining hosts to the great white throne, and crowned with a crown whose brightness was above that of the stars, and more enduring. The glorified Son of God had made him welcome, in the mansion prepared for him, by saying: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." Robes of white, shining with the splendor of a thousand suns, had been placed upon him; and the harp of God had been put in his hand. He was never to want again. Never to beg again. Never to weep again. Never to suffer again. Never again to lack for friends. This is wealth eternal; and it was this manner of wealth that fell to the possession of Lazarus, when death took him by the arm and led him to the angel band waiting to become his body-guard. He dropped out of sight on earth, and the world went right on as though he had never lived; but God looked after his memory, and sent his name shining down through the ages, while that of the rich man was left to rot. A good man needs no monument. Nothing but his dust can be put into a coffin. The monument that was erected over the grave of the rich man has long since been thrown down and ground to powder, but God will see to it that the name of Lazarus shall never be forgotten.

We can not all be rich in this life. Some of us must be poor, and many of us have to be very poor;

but, thank God, we can all be rich in the life to come! None of us will need to be beggars there. We can all be millionaires in that blessed land—heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. But we must make the choice ourselves as to which it shall be. Friend, how do you stand on this great question to-day? What is your decision? For God or self—which?

The second prayer of the rich man was for his brethren. When those in heaven, earth, and hell are all concerned about our salvation, is n't it about time we were taking some interest in it ourselves? This rich man had no thought about his brethren until he got where he had to stop making money. Had he been as much interested in them before he died as he was afterward, he would have saved himself; and had he saved himself, he would perhaps have saved them. This ought to be a lesson to every one of us. Are you doing anything to get those you love to the Savior? Are you as unconcerned about them as this rich man was? They had Moses and the prophets. We have more than they had. We not only have Moses and the prophets, but we have the written Word of God, the testimony of the Church for centuries, the prosperity of Christian nations, and the persuasive entreaty of the Holy Ghost, and the warnings of Providence to flee from the wrath to come. In God's name, sinner, whether you are rich or poor, stop right where you are, and consider this great question: What are you going to do with Christ? Are you going to permit him to give you eternal life and eternal wealth, or will you continue to

reject his offers of love, and bring upon yourself eternal beggary and eternal torment? Choose to-day. If begging must be done somewhere, it is better to beg for bread on earth, than in hell to beg for water.

CHAPTER XI.

FROM CHAOS TO REST.

An Account of the Author's Conversion.

MY parents were very poor. My earliest recollection is of want and hardship. We lived in a little house of three rooms. We had no books except Bible and hymn-book, an old English Reader, and a volume of Religious Meditations. The Bible contained a horrible wood-cut of the devil, in the form of a dragon, chained, and being led by an angel toward a pit, out of which flames were bursting. I expect that picture has done as much toward making infidels as anything that ever came from the printing-press. It used to scare me almost to death. I believed in the dragon and his awful claws, and could sometimes see him a great deal plainer in the dark than I could in the book. This and other things made me a slave to superstition. I often suffered untold agonies in the dark.

My childhood had little of play in it. I don't think I ever owned a toy that cost money, and the smell of new cloth and new leather was with me a great event. From my earliest recollection I had to work much and play little. My parents worked in a woollen factory near by, and as soon as I was big

enough to feed wool into a machine, I also became a toiler with a money value.

My father was never strong. He was an invalid all his life. His manner was quiet and unobtrusive. Whatever he could not help he bore with meekness and submission. No matter how severe his lot, I do not remember that I ever heard him complain. My mother was the opposite of my father in many particulars. She was strong, energetic, and intensely practical. She was naturally hopeful, and, though her lot was hard, she was never discouraged. My parents were not demonstrative in manner. I never saw them kiss one another or any of the children. The grinding toil to which they were continually subjected, and the burdens of poverty they had to carry, no doubt had much to do with causing them to suppress all open manifestations of affection.

My father was a well-meaning, conscientious, and ever faithful Christian; but he had not the gift of teaching, and was very strict in matters of discipline. He carried himself with great solemnity, and was extremely old-fashioned in all his ways and notions. He joined the Methodist Episcopal Church in early childhood, and could not, I presume, recollect the time and manner of his conversion. My mother was also a Christian. She frequently led in prayer at the family altar, and sometimes prayed in public. Both of my parents were always anxious that I should become a Christian, and did their best to have me walk in the right way; but unfortunately the light which they were so anxious I should receive, did not reach me until after they had both gone home to heaven.

Looking back over life into the depths of my own heart, I can now see that I would have given myself to God as readily as the sparks fly upward had the glorious gospel of his love been made known to me in childhood. But I had no ears then through which the glad message of redemption could reach me. There was nothing in my experience by which I could comprehend what love really meant. It was simply a shadowy term with no real meaning. There was no manifestation of love in my childhood life. No communion between my heart and that of my parents. My heart hungered for love as a thirsty child wants water, but it was not until I had grown to manhood that I learned how dearly father and mother loved me. Had that knowledge come to me when a child, it would have saved me from becoming an infidel. Father never took me on his knee and applied to me any term of endearment. Mother never kissed me, and whenever I was punished it was by authority of the Scriptures. If you must whip your children, parents, do n't tell them that the Bible tells you to do so.

If I had a pet it was sure to die or be stolen from me. Such things and such experiences soon made me older than my years. They made me think, and ask questions to which I could find no answers. I could n't understand why my father was poor and had to work so hard, while another man who swore and never went to Church lived in a big house and had a carriage and horses. I wanted to know why mother had to wear calico while other women could have silk. I could n't tell why it was that another boy, who was n't half as good as I was,

could have a pony and plenty of nice clothes, and all the playthings he wanted, while I had to go in patches and could n't even have a few new marbles.

The trouble with me was, that I had the wrong kind of a head to take things as I found them and be satisfied. I wanted to know how everything happened to be so-and-so, and who was to blame for it. The gospel as I understood it did n't satisfy me. It stunned and shocked me. The conception of God that dawned upon me, from the teaching I received and the preaching I heard, filled me with rebellion and horror. I could not give him my head, and he did not attract my heart. I soon got to hating the Bible as much as I hated the picture of the dragon in it; for whenever I wanted to have my own way about anything, the Bible was quoted as authority why I should n't; and if I was to be whipped, the Bible furnished the reason for doing it.

Sunday was an awful day, and I could always tell when it came without an almanac. It was the day on which I had to be washed, and every boy knows what that means. Mothers, if you want your boys to love the Lord, don't wash them on Sunday morning. Better do it Saturday night. At nine o'clock my father and I went to Sunday-school, where I passed a long, dismal hour; and then came preaching by a man of whom I was almost as much afraid as I was of the dragon in the Bible. When the preacher had tired himself and his congregation clear out, we had a change of terrors. Church let out, and class-meeting began. I liked this meeting better than the other because it brought us that much nearer to dinner-time. But after we had gone

home and had our cold bite, there was still another class-meeting at three o'clock. I do n't believe in unnecessary work on the Sabbath, but somehow I can't help thinking that when there are children in the family, the Lord will not be displeased if you give them the best dinner of the week on Sunday. I believe that is about the best time you can find to have chicken on the table.

The class-meeting was a great mystery to me. Everybody seemed to be distressed almost to death, and yet they nearly all claimed to be happy. At that time I had never had a joy that found expression in tears, and I naturally thought the people were in great trouble. They were all ground down by poverty, like my own people; and I suppose about the happiest hours of their lives were spent in those class-meetings. They bewildered me then; but I think I understand them now.

I used to think I must be one of the greatest sinners alive, because I could n't help but think it would be ever so much nicer to get out of doors, and run and play, and make all the noise I could, than it was to go to Church, and stay in the house, and try so dreadful hard to be religious. I could n't understand how it was, but it seemed as though Sunday was longer than all the week-days put together. Something seemed to get the matter with the clock that day, and O how dreadful slow it did run! And then they used to tell me that heaven was one never-ending Sunday! Well, to save my life, I could n't feel a bit anxious to get there; and it may be that that was my first step toward infidelity, for I did n't like what the preacher had to

say about the other place any better. So I had to take to the woods to keep from being scared to death. Parents, who want to help the Lord to save their children, ought to make the Sabbath the brightest of all days. Try to make it so full of sunshine that they will want it to come again in the middle of the week.

It can readily be seen how my speculations led me into out-and-out unbelief, while yet a boy in my teens, and long before I found out from books anything about infidelity. There were years during which I was tossed and pitched by doubts and superstitious fears, suffering tortures that a devil would almost pity; but at last my philosophy gave me mental liberty, for I believed that at last I had got into the sunlight of truth. By the time I reached manhood, I was pretty well settled in unbelief.

Often a desire to be a blessing to others, who were in bondage to the same superstitious fears which had enslaved me, came over me; and I believe that I can say that all the work I did for infidelity was with an honest motive to do good and benefit people whom I pitied.

Whenever I came in close contact with real good people, there was something within me that made me wish I could be like them; but it never occurred to me that there was anything in the Bible that could help me to do it. I believed that all such people were good in spite of a bad religion, and I thought they would have been just as good had the Bible never been printed.

It often happened that many years passed in

succession without my seeing the inside of a church; and on the rare intervals when I did attend, satisfactory arguments would constantly be coming up in my mind to meet those of the preacher as I listened to the sermon. The difference between the actual life and the profession of many people disgusted me, and I was fond of measuring myself with such people, and was always much puffed up with self-righteousness when I saw how well I stood the test.

After many years of unfortunate life—in which there was poverty, struggle, and affliction—there was a change in my fortunes for the better. In 1867 I got started in business for myself by establishing the *Gazette*, at Bellevue, Ohio. I published this paper for a number of years, and prospered beyond my expectations. I also published the Oberlin (Ohio) *News* for a year; but was glad to sell out at a sacrifice, and get away from the town, because it was so religious. Any one acquainted with the spiritual climate of Oberlin about that time (1869) will agree that it was a hot place for an infidel.

While at Bellevue, I became engaged in a publishing business that soon became too large to be handled to advantage in a village, and I was obliged to remove with it to Cincinnati, where, in a few years, I accumulated all the money I wanted, and retired from business. While at Cincinnati, however, I took a public stand for infidelity, and was known as an energetic worker in liberal ranks. I was one of the charter members of the Liberal Society of that city, and held office in it. At a

celebration of Tom Paine's birthday, in January, 1880, Reuben Daily—then and now editor of the Jeffersonville (Indiana) *Daily News*—and myself were the speakers. It gives me pleasure to state that Mr. Daily is now also a Christian.

In 1882 I retired to a beautiful farm, of over two hundred acres, two miles from Liberty. Indiana, which I had purchased the year previous, and soon after disposed of my business. I set about improving my place, and poured out money upon it. It was to be my home for the remainder of my life, I thought, and I would have everything to suit me. Accordingly I began building an elegant mansion, with all the city improvements, and adding many other features of an ornamental and expensive nature.

My influence in my new home was openly against the Church. I talked infidelity in the stores, on the streets, and wherever I went; and I also lived it. I did not attend Church, or seek associates among Christian people. I kept wine in my cellar, cut wheat and played billiards on Sunday, became president of a progressive euchre-club, openly boasted of philanthropic motives, and claimed for myself more than average morality. Truly, I might say with Paul, "that after the strictest sect I lived a Pharisee." From a human stand-point, there was n't much probability at this time that I would ever become a preacher; but the Lord moves in mysterious ways his wonders to perform.

And now I come to the far more agreeable task of telling how I became a Christian. The winter of 1885-6 I spent, with my family, in Chicago, and

it was during this time that I was one night drawn by curiosity to go and hear D. L. Moody preach. His subject that night was the Prodigal Son, and it turned out to be the first sermon on the love of God I had ever heard preached. I had never seen anything in the story of the prodigal before but a touch of poetic sentiment, but that night it became a Divine revelation. While Moody spoke, the Holy Spirit became my preacher; and it was made as plain as day to me that God had a heart just like that of the prodigal's father, and that the awful thing about sin is that it causes God to suffer because it keeps us from being happy. While Moody was talking he seemed to be describing exactly the kind of a God my heart had always demanded, though up to that hour I had never had a real hope that such a God existed. The long-suffering and uncondemning love the father had for his wayward son was to me just then what the sight of water would be to a famishing pilgrim, and I thought I would be willing to undergo anything to know beyond all doubt that there was a God who loved me with such love as that. It was exactly what my soul longed for. It was the kind of salvation I needed. There was sense in it. It upset all theories of thought, and went direct to my heart. I forgot to be critical. I forgot that I hated the Bible. I forgot that I could not believe that Christ was the Son of God. I forgot everything, except that a plain, unpretending man was standing before me, and apparently talking directly to me, with an earnestness and simplicity that convinced me he believed every word he said. From

his first words I listened to him spell-bound. I knew that I could love such a God as he described, and I believed it would be a joy to serve him.

I remained to the after meeting in the inquiry-room, with the hope that I might have a conversation with Mr. Moody. There were some questions I wanted to ask him. I was disappointed, however, and did not get to have any talk with him that night; but something happened that did me much more good. There were fifty-one other inquirers, all men, for it was a men's meeting; and the evangelist took us all into another room, where he insisted upon our kneeling while he offered prayer. This I did not want to do. I did not believe in prayer, and had not gone there to pray. What I wanted to do was to ask questions, and get light that way. Mr. Moody insisted, though, that we should go to God for help, and finally we were all prevailed upon to kneel down. Such a prayer as was then offered I had never heard. It did n't put God away beyond the stars somewhere, but it called upon him as a Father, and seemed to bring him right into the room. While Mr. Moody was praying, I thought I would give everything if I could only know the God of whom he had been talking well enough to pray to him as he was doing.

After the prayer, and a few kind words from Mr. Moody, we returned singly to the larger room, each one being met at the door and escorted to a seat by a worker. I fell to the care of a man who came at me with an open Bible. This stirred up all the devils in me, and caused me to say so many bitter things, that he soon saw that he was not the

man to deal with me; and in a few minutes he left me to seek another helper. The man he brought was a recently converted atheist. He had a Bible, but he kept it out of sight, and gave me a leaf from his own experience. I saw at once that he had traveled the same road that I had, but that he was now a different man altogether. I had a conversation with him which gave me a mustard-seed grain of faith that may be, after all, I had been mistaken, and there might be something in religion.

I went away from the meeting longing to know the truth. I did n't think anything about praying, but I wanted to know God. When I went to bed, my last thought was a wish, or rather a yearning from the very depths of my heart, that God would give me evidence sufficient to believe on him. I think there must have been a willingness to submit myself to God if he would manifest himself.

I soon fell asleep, and slept soundly; but when I awoke I found, to my awful consternation, that God had given me the wished-for evidence. He had said: "Let there be light, and there was light." At last God had revealed himself to me. I can not describe the condition of mind in which I found myself. I was in a hell of torment, for I now saw myself as God saw me. The moment I was awakened to the truth of his reality, I was also made aware of my own sinful nature; and yet I can not say that I was especially troubled because of anything I had ever done myself. My own individual acts of sin did not rise before me like mountains high, as we sometimes sing. That was n't the thing. It was n't what I had done in the past, but

what I was in my heart at that moment, that troubled me. For the first time in my life the real meaning of sin was made clear to me. I saw that my nature was at enmity with God's nature. I knew that in me were seeds of evil which only needed suitable conditions to make me as vile as the vilest. The only reason why I was not as actively wicked as the worst man on earth was because I had n't had his chances; and it was salvation from this awful condition of heart that I was groaning for. I did not know what to do, and the thought of doing nothing almost crazed me.

I have often been asked what means God used to reveal himself to me. Did I have a vision, something like St. Paul had? No. Was I stricken to the floor by some violent and unknown force, as some have testified? No. Did I hear an audible voice speaking to me? No. Did I see the crucified Christ, bleeding on the tree for me? No. I had none of these experiences. How, then, did God speak to me? I do n't suppose I could make this clear to another soul, or say anything that would have any weight as evidence to the skeptical. God is infinite in his resources, and does not repeat himself. No two people have the same knowledge of God, any more than two persons can see the same rainbow. Abraham saw him as one man beholds another; to Moses he appeared in the burning bush; while Elisha saw him in the whirlwind that took from him his master; and John beheld him as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,—never appearing in the same way to any two people, and yet always in a way that proves

beyond all question that he is God. God came to me in his own Word. In an instant the neglected Bible, which I had all my life rejected and hated, was made to blaze with the seal of Divinity, and I knew in my soul that the thoughts in it had been born in the mind of God.

When I awoke on the morning after the Moody meeting I was in the "Interpreter's House," and wonderful things were being made known to me. Thoughts were flowing through my mind which did not bear the slightest resemblance to anything that had ever been there before. I knew that an outside Intelligence was explaining things to me that had been a life-long mystery. I was made to see, with the brightness of the noonday sun, that the second verse of the first chapter of Genesis was a correct picture of my own soul: "Without form, and void; and darkness upon the face of the deep;" forever pitching and tossing, with unsatisfied longings, and never at rest. Until that hour I had never had a spiritual thought in my life. It had never occurred to me that the Bible was full of hidden meaning—that it was a Book within a Book; a Book in which the affairs of men and the histories of nations were used as symbols to give utterance to the thoughts of God. On the rare occasions when I had tried to read the Bible, I had opened it just as I would have done any other book, and had tried to read it in the same way. But on that morning God gave me new eyes, and the Bible was no longer a dead mass of paper and binding, but a living volume, radiant with meaning and bright with hope. At that time I didn't know

much about the Bible. There were occasional events—like the stories of Noah and the ark, and Jonah and the whale—that had pictured themselves upon my mind with such vividness in childhood that I could never forget them; but beyond that, about all I had ever heard or read had become a hazy fog. Mingled with the anguish of mind, which I have above referred to, there was also something of almost ecstatic joy in my new condition—joy that I had found the truth at last. There is something in every soul that protests against annihilation, and there is not a man on earth who would not rather go to the lowest hell than have his existence blotted out forever. From that moment to this I have never for one instant had the slightest doubt about the truth of the Bible. Before conversion I had a sorry time with skepticism, but since then I have not been troubled with it.

I had only one acquaintance in Chicago whom I knew to be a Christian. I went to see him, and told him what had happened; but his time was not his own, and he could spare only a few minutes to give me counsel. He told me of the noonday prayer-meetings at Farwell Hall, and advised me to go there. I went out into the cold air, and walked the streets. It was a bitter cold day, but I was burning up. I never did such walking as I did that morning. The ordinary Chicago rush surrounded me; but the people went too slow for me, and I passed some one at every step. Though in the midst of multitudes I was alone. Jostled every moment by the hurrying thousands, I was in solitude. I was not going anywhere; I had no object-

ive point ; and yet every muscle was strained to its highest tension. I was having the same experience Cain expresses in Genesis iv, 13, 14—banishment from the presence of God.

There have been times of anxious waiting with me, when moments seemed hours; but that day was the longest day of my life. Time seemed to have stopped, and eternity to have commenced. Twelve o'clock was an awfully remote future period. O, how the moments did drag ! I would look at my watch, and then, after what seemed to be a very long, long time, I would look again—and the hands had scarcely moved. I was in a hell that made fire and brimstone but a weak, mocking symbol. I was as one dying with thirst, yet surrounded with cooling fountains, without the power to drink ; or as one in the last agonies of starvation, seated at a full table, without strength to lift a crumb. My soul was burning up with hunger for the love of God. At that moment I would have given everything I owned on earth to have some one take me kindly by the hand, and tell me that God loved me. My ears were deaf to all else ; and yet I could not hear this. O, how I did want to hear that blessed assurance ! The sound of prayer would have been very sweet just then. It never once came into my mind that I could pray for myself. I thought I would have to have a good man to pray for me—some one who could pray as Moody had done. I knew that I needed a mediator. It would not do for me to try to go to God alone.

I was determined that the business of my life from that moment should be to seek and serve my

Maker. Nothing could now turn me from this purpose. An irresistible power seemed to force me forward; and yet I did not know what I was to do, or how I was to proceed. Sometimes I would recall a long-forgotten portion of Scripture that I had learned in boyhood—for I had never learned any afterward—and it would at once become luminous with meaning. The very voice of God himself would speak to me from it, as he did to Moses from the burning bush.

But finally that almost endless forenoon passed away, and I found myself in Farwell Hall at twelve o'clock, only to meet with cruel disappointment. There was to be no prayer-meeting there that day, after all. It was Saturday, and the consideration of the Sunday-school lesson was to occupy the hour. On the platform stood a man, with a blackboard and a piece of chalk.

From the heights of great expectancy my heart fell to the lowest depths. I dropped into a seat, and again the beads of agony covered me. I could scarcely listen, and yet I could not leave. I wondered if the meeting would never end. How I did long to hear some one give expression, in words of earnest prayer, to the great need that was crying out within me for the purifying presence of God in my soul! I wanted to hear the people talking about his love, and his wonderful goodness to the sons of men. But at the close of the meeting—although I was surrounded by men to whom it would have been a great joy to talk and pray with me—I had not the courage to say a word, and, passing to the street, I again resumed my rushing walk.

My experience was similar to the above for three days, though the Sabbath I passed nearly altogether in the house of God. I wanted to surrender, and yet I appeared to be blind as to the way, and didn't know just how to do it. The people told me to submit myself to Christ; to believe in him; but this seemed to be something that I could n't do, for the way was full of intellectual difficulties that I could not surmount. What it meant to receive and accept Christ greatly perplexed me, because at that time I had not yet got to where I could believe in his existence or divinity. But the revelation of God kept getting clearer, and what he wanted me to do was also made more manifest, until at last the rebellion was all taken out of my heart. I was willing to do or be anything that God should will. The spiritual Christ, whose Spirit dwells in all Christians, was then revealed to me, and at once I opened the door to admit him into my heart. At that moment the burden rolled away; the peace which passeth understanding came quietly into my soul, and from that moment to the present there has never been an hour when I have not known that I was saved.

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